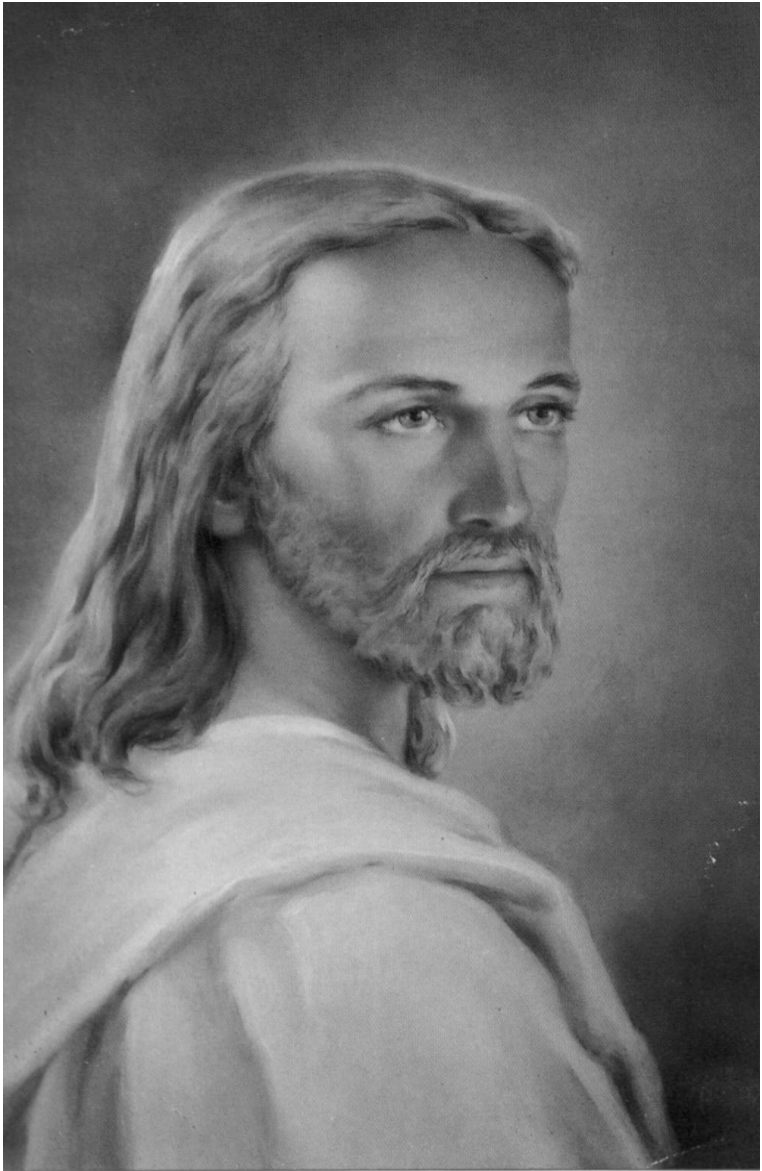


The Planning of Salvation

The Story of Reconciliation between God and Man

Father/ Angelos Guirguis Shenouda

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H.H. Pope Tawdrous II, 118th Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and the See of St. Mark

Introduction

This book is the result of four years of hard work and prayers, in which I addressed a very important topic namely the planning of salvation and life in the Bible.

I was shocked while I was talking to a very important person during an international conference when he said, “we no longer teach the Old Testament in our churches and we have confined our selves to the New Testament”!

When I asked him in astonishment how could that be, he said, “how could I teach the Old Testament when it says that God has selected a certain people and left all the rest of the world, and He ordered that people to kill all other peoples and fight them, even to confiscate their land.” I asked him, “Do you believe that these events really took place?” He said “yes I do; I have no choice with history confirming the events in addition to the archaeological evidences that keep these events in the memory”. I said “and you believe that this people in the Old Testament did all that with the intervention of God like the exodus from Egypt, feeding them in the desert for forty years, and being in front of them through the ark of the covenant and all that He did for them in the history of the Old Testament.” When he said to me yes I believe, I said “this means that you believe that the Old Testament is true and divine, but you do not know the intentions of God behind these issues!” so he said, “and what are the intentions of God behind the wars and the killing?” I told him that every thing, which took place in the Old Testament, forms a part of the story of salvation of man that this is called the planning of salvation and this is the first goal of the Bible. Every thing in it is a marvellous part of the plan of salvation.

I left him but continued to consider these questions and the way they are handled by the human mind. When I returned, I found that those who criticise the Bible and Christianity insistently ask these questions, so the result was this book. It is the final fruit of the work of God in leading my thoughts during these years. These thoughts are centred on two axes:

- **First:** the will of God and his work for our salvation after the fall
- **Second:** the will of man and his response to the invitation of God for salvation.

This book, dear reader, tells the story of the divine love to man and His will to keep him close from the creation to the salvation, through His incarnation and the redemption on the cross. Starting with the story of creation and the sin of man in the disobedience of God's commandments all the way through the promises of God in the Old Testament and finalizing the salvation on the cross.

This story did not take place by chance or in a chaotic way of events, but it was in accordance with a plan put down by God for the salvation of man whom He loved from the beginning to the end.

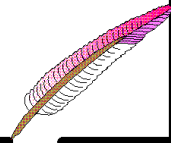
May God make this book a cause of blessing to each and every one who read it with the prayers of His Holiness the Pope, Anba Tawdrous the second.

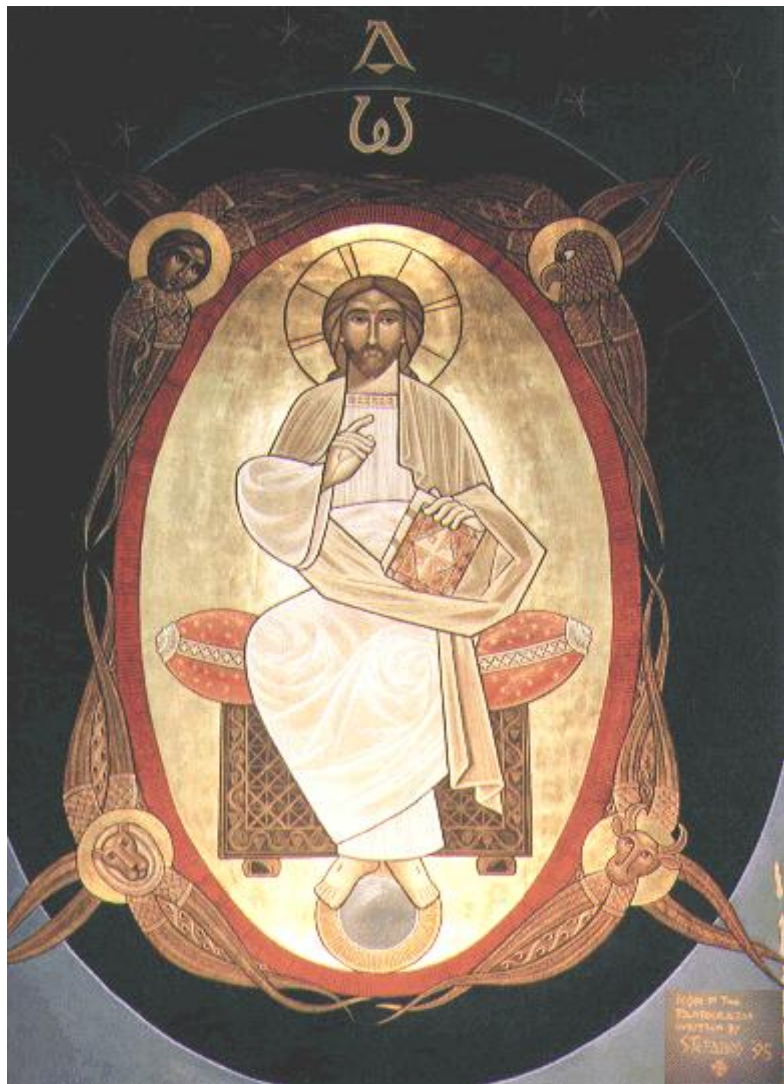
Father/ Angelos Guirguis Shenouda

CHAPTER ONE

THE CORE OF THE STORY AND AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING

- ☆ The planning of Salvation in the Bible.
- ☆ The meeting of the Old Testament with God in the shadows of Christ the Lord.
- ☆ The unity of vision in the planning of salvation in the Old and New Testaments.





God created man in his image as He said in the book of Genesis

**“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”
(Genesis 1:27)**

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7)

This resemblance was in freedom, mind, holiness, power and immortality. Through this resemblance, He gave him the possibility of living with Him; the image of God made man a living being in God. With this image man had the holiness and the power to subdue all that was on earth. With this power he was the crown of all creation. This image represented the relation and the link between God and the inert creation. Man was responsible for it, subdued it and he was the title of the proclaimed love of God in the universe.

When man fell and lost his holiness, he lost the image that used to link him with God, and with his own freedom he broke the relation that used to give him the power; the result of that was death, weakness pain and being far away from God.

God loved man and His feelings cannot change because of a certain event or action. Thus it was inevitable that God prepares another way to meet man, bring him back to life, re-establish the relation with Him and re-make him in his image so that God can dwell in him again.

But how could this happen while man was created as a free creature; he himself should choose the way that he previously refused and fell. He must choose the relation with God, and should

be freely willing to have God dwelling in him thus returning to the image in which he was created.

For that reason the divine planning to save man and redeem him from death went in parallel with uplifting and training his freedom and drawing his attention to choose the way with Him. It was necessary that God takes the case in his hands and create man again, but not bypassing his freedom. As man had his own will, which was separate from the will of God, he might not be willing to live with God again. Even though salvation is inevitable for eternal life, man might still choose death away from God. The problem became thus: man must be saved but with his own freedom.

Thus salvation became dependant on two wills:

1. The will of God to give man back his life and image.
2. The will of man in accepting the work of God for his salvation and to choose to be with him continuously.

As the will of God is eternal and forever acting (never changes), the problem became the will of man as it was changing and corrupted.

The planning of salvation moved gradually in knowledge, preparation and declaration. We will see in the story of salvation that God always opened ways to meet with man and introduce Himself to him in order to make him choose life with Him voluntarily. But the will of man did not always want that. When man, with his ignorance and evil, rejected that way God used to open another way, which fits with his condition and choices. God went down to the level of man's understanding and ignorance and his weak enlightenment in order to lift him up gradually and make him understand the meaning of the existence of God and make his choice with love and faith. He declared to him the deeper and the

deepest until He declared to him the secret of salvation and incarnation.

God always opened ways for man that suit his capabilities at the specific time, and declared to him according to his condition about the relation with Him. Then He lifted him through specific means to prepare his mind and understanding (such as symbols, rituals and declarations) to bring him to the condition that makes him in continuous relation with Him.

We will see however in the story of man that he often met the work of God with weakness and negation. God changed the way again to reach man wherever he was and in various ways to encourage him to know Him and guide him to the way of salvation. We will see how God humbly talked to man with the same language and understandings that he can comprehend under the situation even when they are materialistic and blurred with weak thoughts.

For that reason we will see that the story of creation was very brief in the Bible even though it took a very long period of preparation and planning. It went on quietly without interruption because it was moving on only in accordance with the will of God. But after the fall man had another will that was outside the will of God, thus He used all the means to convince man whom He created free to live with Him and this is the issue of the planning of salvation in the Bible.



☆ *The planning of Salvation in the Bible:*

The Bible is the story of humanity in its relation with God. The story is the tragic confrontation between two contradicting wills, the will of God and His love to man for whom He wishes salvation and life, and the will of man that is confined to his ignorance and not knowing God and how much He loves man. The answer of man to the will of God was rejection, non acceptance some times, and non submissive to the will of God and to his planning of salvation. The story thus with all its chapters contains the plan of God to save man regardless of his will and ignorance.

With this picture, man is the goal of the whole topic and he is the topic of love and love that is predominant in all the lines of the story.

God continued planning for thousands of years preparing the ways of salvation for man who walked in these ways sometimes and often refused, so God opened another suitable way to meet man. We could see these phases and that story in the Bible over the years and God patiently looking at the behaviour of man until he freely arrives to know the following:

- 1. The work of sin and the image of death:** it was inevitable for man to understand that sin is his shame and his blurred image that led him to death and should freely move towards righteousness and eternal life with God.
- 2. The possibility of incarnation of God and the salvation of mankind:** through the appreciation of man of his inability to save himself or to bring life back to himself or even to understand the ways of life without God. The idea of incarnation was prepared with all the methods: symbolic, story telling, words, and clear declaration. When God appeared to

Abraham at the tent's door and ate with him, He was preparing our minds to the possibility of his manifestation in flesh:

“So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him;” (Genesis 18:2)

The appearance of God to Moses in the bush and talking to him was a sign of the possibility of the union between godhood with manhood.

“And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.” (Exodus 3:2)

When the temple was consecrated, the glory of God appeared so that the possibility of His glory coming down on the earth could be seen.

“So that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.” (1 Kings 8:11)

He talked to prophets, mouth to ear, so that they could know him through his word.

“...Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:14)

He opened the horizons of heavens in a revelation to the prophet Isaiah so that he might see His throne, thus removing from our minds the impossibility of seeing Him and meeting Him.

“And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!" (Isaiah 6: 3)

All that was to declare the possibility of incarnation and the meeting of mankind with the Godhood in his manhood so that after all the preparations it happened:

**“... The Word became flesh and dwelt among us”
(John 1:14)**

This means that God who is the Word that prepared humanity for receiving Him incarnated, dwelled among us; as our teacher St Paul the apostle says:

**“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;”
(Hebrews 1:1, 2)**

St. Paul the apostle also said explaining that Christ the Lord, to him all the glory, is the centre of the planning of salvation:

“having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.” (Ephesians 1:9, 10)

Therefore knowing God in the Bible is very much related to knowing his salvation plans that **St. Augustine** says: *“if you know the plans, you understand the scriptures”*. Without knowing the plan of salvation, the Bible becomes just a history. However if we know the planning of salvation, the Bible becomes not mere history of people or stories of specific eras, but it is the history of salvation that includes the documents and covenants between God and man.

Therefore we hold very tight to each and every word in it because through the Bible we know God and can hear the pulse of his love to us and listen to the sweet story between the groom and his bride.

Even though these dealings were with a specific people, all were for the sake of the entire world. The story had to take place with one of the peoples so that God could be disclosed to them and through them (as will be explained later). We must look at the entire Bible as a general vision of salvation not restricted to a specific people or too few persons. The personalities that we meet in the Bible are the performers of the story that is told by God himself so that we know Him, love him and be closely attached to him. The Bible is then is the story of our salvation that started in the book of Genesis:

**“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
(Genesis 1:1)**

It ends with the book of Revelation:

**“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth...”
(Revelation 21:1)**

Between the first earth and the new earth the story of life is told; it is told to us through persons and those persons lead us to God through His words with them. The words overpass time as God is a part of that dialogue and God is not bound with time. The words rise also above individuals as a result of God’s dealings in that way, because the dealings of God never change.

The Bible is thus a living relation made by God in a marvellous design to weave of it the lines of man’s life with Him. When we see the declarations, dealings and planning in the Bible, we come to know Him and love Him. **St. Irenaeus said:** *“The Bible establishes*

friendship of man with God and God with man". This companionship that is in the Bible can only be with our Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory, as in him only can mankind know God and establish friendship with him.



☆ *The meeting of the Old Testament with God in the shadows of Christ the Lord:*

Even at the level of the Old Testament, the picture of the meeting of the people with God was in the features and shadows of the person Christ the Lord and the symbolism of his being. We see him in Moses and Joseph, in the promise, sacrifices, rituals, and the coming down of his glory on the tabernacle, and in the Ark of the Covenant. The Old Testament lived in this symbolic glorified being until the divine incarnation when all these symbols came to life and acquired the power which otherwise would have been with no value.

The Old Testament in the planning of salvation takes three axes, namely:

- A) History B) The Law and the Covenant C) Prophecy**

A) History:

In history we can see the dealings of God with humanity along the ages and civilizations; we see in the history the dealings of God with persons representing living examples from which we know the will of God and the way of salvation. Therefore the history in the Bible does not give separate stories or mere tales from which we can take some bywords. It is the history of the entire mankind with God on the way that brought God to man, and the reactions of mankind to God's initiatives to save us. Through that we came to know God, not by spoken words but through life, which the forefathers lived on earth. Thus we know that the way of salvation is not mere commandments and laws and inert signs, but it is a living way and a path lived by real persons and saints.

◆ *The history of the Old Testament is a reality and a symbol:*

The history and those stories represented a gradual growth in our knowledge of God and the way of salvation. Therefore those individuals who wrote it were not historians but they recorded these stories through the work of God's spirit in them. The revelation that was controlling the idea could be considered as the tone of a speaker who was very precise in his selection and picks the specific elements that he wishes to draw the attention of the listener to. Thus it would not be just a story but an example and a way in which we could see the life of salvation.

The core story in the history of salvation is this: man has become a slave for the powers of darkness; he lost the freedom of life and the power of holiness. Death has become the lord that reaps the fruits of lives of each and every one born on earth regardless of his life or strength; that is the Old Testament. Thus Christ the Lord

to him all the glory came; the incarnate God to break the power of bondage, give victory and resurrection and open the gates of freedom to his people. His people are whoever believed in him, loved him, knew him, and chose him; and this became the New Testament.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,” (John 1:12)

At this level, we can look at the history of the Old Testament as the first part of the story, but it is the part in which salvation was just symbols and images; life in it was nothing but dreams and hopes. God was concealed behind the symbols, the words and the images. Thus the Old Testament, at the symbolic level, reflected another history and another reality, which is the reality that will be fulfilled with Christ. It was as if God wanted to prepare mankind with a historic atmosphere that existed within their minds, so that when He comes all the elements of the identity of the people would be prepared for his coming and ready to accept him as the saviour. The roots of the story are drawn as a symbol and its context and meaning existed in the unconsciousness of mankind as an image printed in their hearts and fulfilled longings in their history.

When Christ the Lord came and opened the horizons of salvation and the symbolic history was revealed under the shadows of reality, we understood all the images that used to carry the shadow of salvation. That is what St. Paul the apostle tells us about the people crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 14) as a symbol and a shadow of the reality of baptisms that we receive in Christ the Lord, to him all the glory:

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ” (1 Corinthians 10: 1-4)

That is how Christ the Lord, to him all the glory, reveals to us the shadowy and symbolic meaning of a historic event such as the manna that came down from heaven; He presents the event in reality which is the picture of his incarnation and descending from heaven and that we are going to eat his flesh and live forever as the Lord of Glory Jesus said:

“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”
(John 6: 48-51)

The Lord Jesus Christ explains to us also the bronze serpent that was given to cure the people in the desert from the bite of the snake:

“Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” (Numbers 21:8)

That was a symbol and a shadow for what the Lord of Glory Jesus did on the cross:

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,” (John 3:14)

In the story of Jonah the prophet, Christ the Lord drew our attention to the symbolic meaning of the resurrection in the story:

**“For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”
(Matthew 12:40)**

The meanings of many other events or issues in their specific pictures intended by God are revealed through their links to the symbol of a survival truth in Christ. History then reflected the planning; and the history of the people and the whole Old Testament had the shadowy meaning of the history of the entire humanity with God at the level of the actual acts of salvation that were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Finally the history of the people in the Old Testament also represented a spiritual symbol of our personal history with God and the way we lived our spiritual life with him at the individual level. The story then is that God allowed us to know Him and walked with us in the pathless wilderness then let us enter after struggle the Promised Land. He gave us the commandments to support us on our way and cleansed us with the blood to become his holy people and his beloved church. We might fall and rise again and repent and He accepts us, cleanses us and invites us to be firm in him until the fullness of time comes for the second coming of the Lord of Glory Jesus Christ (Advent) and eternal life with him.

For that reason, in our vision of this holly history, which reflects the way of life with God, we should personally be involved in the topics of the history and our own salvation, and be in all its characters and persons at the level of life and the way in it.

B) The law and the covenant:

The word “covenant” is the title of the salvation story; it means a binding or a contract. Sin has induced a separation as a result of evil that became the nature of man, but God wanted to make a new picture in which He meets man and bind with him through it. Thus the covenant was before Christ the Lord, to him all the glory, in a specific context: these were the commandments, the law and the sacrifices that used to gain their power from the act of Christ and his atonement on the cross, which took place several thousands years after the people practiced these in that way. It was the only way for man to live with God before the incarnation and the entrance of the entire world into the bosoms of Christ the Lord, to him all the glory. Thus the salvation reality existed in that covenant.

The covenant was for the entire world, not to a single people or to specific persons. It was to the people of Israel as the mediator between God and the other peoples, just as the prophet Moses was the mediator of Israel in front of God and later other prophets and kings took over that roll. These were the persons authorized to sign the contract that is between God and mankind, as the world was still not mature enough; it was as a child in mind, vision and knowledge. The world was not ready by itself to establish the contract in that manner, so it was necessary to have the people of Israel to act on its behalf. That is why God described Israel as “**My firstborn**” (**Exodus 4:22**). He did not say my only son. As a first born, Israel had the right of the covenant with God and to sign the contract with God on behalf of his brothers, meaning the other peoples.

The law represented the clauses of the contract and the way of living in it; that was done on two main axes:

1) Laws of Salvation:

God described these as eternal statutes, and they represent a symbolic picture for the people to live in. However they reflected another invisible fact, which was connected to this symbol and that, is the reality of our Lord Jesus Christ, to him all the glory. This means that these statutes by themselves and without binding to the Lord Christ were useless, as St. Paul the apostle said:

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” (Hebrews 10:4)

The statutes were useful in as much as they had a resemblance and symbolized another salvation fact that was bound to it; through this symbol lived the people in the reality that did not happen yet, as if they were in the contract of truth through the symbol as our teacher St. Paul said:

**“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.”
(Hebrews 10:1)**

The law and the statutes took their holiness and work from an event that would take place later in Christ the Lord, to him all the glory.

There might be someone who asks whether the rituals were mere a rehearsal of what is going to happen? We say to him: “No, it joined in the work before it took place; this is because the real work that will be fulfilled later will be done by the incarnate God himself. The involvement of the godhood that is united with the manhood into this work gives it a power that precedes its actual time of fulfilment. Since this work was not done by the godhood

alone but by the manhood also, it was necessary that mankind should actually wait for this event to take it at the level of a real historical, tangible and eternal fact. Thus humanity has entered into a salvation contract at the symbolic level through the entrance of Israel into the covenant. With these salvation deeds the entire world was painted with the image of salvation. That was through a divine painting of the symbol, which was prepared by God and He brought it ahead of the time of the reality because He was participating in that reality in his relation with the people of Israel. However that was not enough, as the truth itself should take place at the level of real act. The work should be done in participation of both the godhood and the manhood as one nature. Since the manhood of Christ the Lord, to him all the glory, was not eternal mankind had to live in waiting for this work to be fulfilled in the fullness of time. It was not enough for humanity to be painted with the paint of salvation that was in the symbol with the people of Israel, as without the real event the symbol means nothing.

2) Laws of organization:

These are statutes related to the society and how it was organized; it reflected the image of justice and Gods intentions in giving his people the special features among other peoples that did not know Him. It helped to hinder Israel from acquiring the civilian statutes of other nations that could have interfered in the planning of salvation.

C) Prophecy:

The promises and the words that God sent through the prophets to Israel and then to the entire humanity in order to make them trust the faith in salvation and to wait for the Christ; without Christ all the words and promises of God to the prophets would have been useless, powerless and with no real action.

◆ *Prophecies are of several types:*

1- **Messianic salvation prophecies:**

These are the straightforward and direct prophecies about the salvation in Christ the Lord, to him all the glory. They draw his image, his life and his work and make us know him from the first sight when we find him; they leave no margin of doubt for anyone. Such as:

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 6:9)

And also:

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

Those told us about the coming of Christ the Lord and his birth of a virgin.

Also about his passion and crucifixion, the prophet Isaiah said:

“Surely He has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him,

**and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.”
(Isaiah 53:4-7)**

There are also many prophecies about his resurrection and ascension.

2- People’s Historical Salvation Prophecies:

These are the prophecies concerning the salvation of the people from the hands of other peoples, and these prophecies did actually come true, even though the Jewish history itself bears the symbol of salvation for the world and humanity from evil as it was mentioned before.

3- Individual prophecies:

These are prophecies about individuals who will have a roll in the plan of salvation, such as the prophecy of prophet Isaiah about king Cyrus of Persia who ordered the return of the people from exile in Babylon:

“Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held to subdue nations before him and loose the armor of kings, to open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut.” (Isaiah 45:1)

The prophet Malachi prophesied about John the Baptist saying:

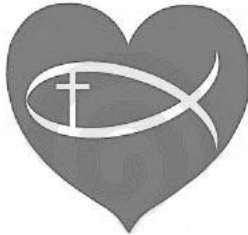
“Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me.” (Malachi 3:1)

4- Spiritual Life Prophecies Resulting from Salvation:

These show the picture of the life of salvation and those who enjoy the salvation, the picture of freedom, and the defeat of evil as prophet Jeremiah prophesied about life in the New Testament:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt,..."

(Jeremiah 31: 31-32)



☆ *The unity of vision in the planning of salvation in the Old and New Testaments:*

After the fall of man, the work of God for man became linked to the question that God asked Adam *"Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)* and that explains the will of God to reach for man wherever he is. The longings of man to God lie in two questions that the prophet Moses asked God about, namely: *"What is His name?" (Exodus 3:13)* and *"Please, show me Your glory." (Exodus 33:18)*

God's question about man was the story of the Old Testament and the answer of man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory was the New Testament. The Old Testament was all longings to see God and the New Testament is the fulfilment of these desires:

**"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,"
(John 1:14)**

Therefore we can look at the entire Holy Bible as if it is a question and an answer; desires and inabilities; illness, death then healing and carrying on life. The Old Testament reveals the misery of man and his inability; the fulfilment of the desires, the healing, the finishing of the image of man, and God's saving of man appear in the New Testament. We will see in the Old Testament some pictures that will be completed in the New Testament, even at the level of words, symbols, stories and questions.

There is even unity in division and logical arrangement of the issue from the Old Testament to the New Testament as the topic is the same. What is admirable is that the arrangement of the elements of the topic is the same in each unit, for example:

- ❖ **The statutory part of the Old Testament:** the five books of Moses; we find their counterbalance the four gospels in the New Testament as a new covenant and a new spiritual law.
- ❖ **The historical part of the Old Testament:** Starting with the book of Joshua to the Second book of Maccabees which show the trip of the people with God in the church of the Old Testament; this is counterbalanced by the book of Acts which has the same topic in the trip of the New Testament with God on earth.
- ❖ **The expressional part in the Old Testament:** Starting with the book of Job to the Song of Songs; this is counterbalanced by the Epistles in the New Testament.
- ❖ **The prophetic part of the Old Testament:** Starting with Isaiah to Malachi; this is counterbalanced by the book of Revelation which has the same painting as it expresses with prophecy a salvation era that is coming which is the era of the kingdom of heavens with its various pictures.

We can even see the same arrangement of these elements in each unit, as if we are in front of a harmonically constructed structure at the level of the wholeness of the thought and its details. For example we can see the same harmony at the level of the unity of the statutory books and the unity of the New Testament:

- ❖ **In Genesis:** the principles of life with God, we see the same issue in the four Gospels.
- ❖ **In Exodus:** the formation of the people of God and the church of the Old Testament, and in the book of Acts we see the formation of the people of God and the church of the New Testament.

- ❖ **In Leviticus:** this book shows the relation and the priesthood picture of the people that includes the meeting of the people with God; the same meaning could be seen in the Epistles of St. Paul the apostle who concentrates on the fullness of the picture in Christ the Lord, and shows the relation of the church with God in Jesus Christ.
- ❖ **In Numbers:** in this book the trip of the people with their struggle and several standpoints on the way, in the Catholic Epistles we can see the picture of the church and the people of God on their way in the new life.
- ❖ **In Deuteronomy:** Moses the prophet presents in this book the expected promises and the declarations that are coming; in the book of Revelation we find the same meaning in the eternal promises and life in heavens.

Yes, my dear reader, the Holy Bible contains what the eternal Word fulfilled in the Old Testament of events and acts that were enlightened and appeared in the real images by His incarnation in the New Testament where the history will be declared as eternal fact not mere previous events. God continued to send with his spirit the lines of light and knowledge in the Old Testament in the form of stories, images and symbols that expressed and painted a way, which showed its features in Christ and reached its limit in the incarnation.

I might have presented, my dear reader, an overall picture of the divine planning of our salvation and its symbols; now let us look at the detailed picture of the steps and phases of the plan of salvation as St. Paul the apostle describes:

**“having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,”
(Ephesians 1:9-11)**



🕯️ *Prayer* 🕯️

My father and Lord...

Look at me and examine me closely

The voice of my soul shakes me

Tell me who am I?!

Earth, dust and motes,

Or a breeze of life and heaven...

May I request you

To embrace me?!

Or have my fall...

Become a thorn in your heart?!

What power moves me!

What features form my face!

What illness deprives me of the dream of life?!

Now I am wrestling my corruption

I fall and I am astonished of my stubbornness...

I am carrying the earth of my corruption...

I did not know how to run away from it

It continues to yell within me and call



Who will carry my death for me?!

Who will break the mounds and free me?!

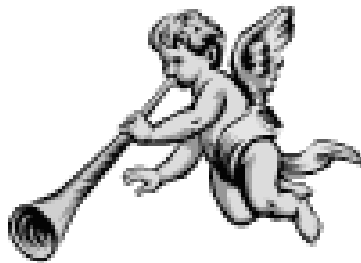
Who will restore my being and rouse me?!

Oh light, truth and life...

Create me anew...

And restore life in me...

Amen...



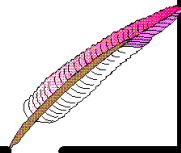
CHAPTER TWO

THE STORY OF MAN

The first stage: From the Fall till the Flood

☆ The Divinely Planning and the Story of Man in this stage

- ❖ In the beginning, God created everything good.
- ❖ The corruption of man.
- ❖ The blood of sacrifices covers man's corruption.
- ❖ The corrupted will of man and the corruption of the universe.
- ❖ The consequences of fall.
- ❖ The symbols and shadows of the stage.
- ❖ The personal and life meaning of the stage.





When all the lines of the story come together as a whole, they paint a marvellous scene of God's incarnation and the redemption of man whom He loved. In each one of the stages of salvation we find that the declaration of incarnation and redemption is the secrete and concealed meaning behind each work in the Old Testament, and the truth that could be reached by whoever attaches himself to God and knows him. However the will of man hindered the appearance of this truth, the understanding of its mysteries and knowing God. Therefore all the chapters of the story and its details were negative on the side of humanity. The stages of salvation are nothing but stages of the attempts by God to put man on a new path after he has refused to live with God in the first way. The stage becomes new pictures of the declarations of God according to what man can accept and comprehend in his condition at the specific time.

The design of salvation that is declared to us in the Bible could be seen in seven stages; in each one of them the planning of salvation took new tools to declare the kingdom and unfold the salvation in stages that involve the people to whom salvation was given at the specific stage, in addition to serving the idea of salvation in general i.e. salvation presented to humanity. When God came down to the level of the peoples in his declaration of salvation He used live tools, images printed in their minds, and life symbols without them they cannot reach life with God nor salvation. God used the human culture, their longings, imaginations and thoughts; He took from them what He found appropriate and suitable to use to make it comprehensible in their minds and He rejected those that do not fit into salvation and life with Him.

Therefore we cannot understand the words of God in the Old Testament or know the power of the symbols and the depths of the imitations in isolation from the environment and culture surrounding the people and humanity for whom the plans of salvation were declared.



The first stage:

From the Fall till the Flood (Deluge)

☆ *The Divinely Planning and the Story of Man in this stage:*

❖ **In the beginning, God created everything good:**

God created man as a subject of love and since God is love, love is continuously seeking a beloved one. Man was not mere a creature that God loved, but He lifted him to the level of His likeness and His image. As man was created in the image of God, he was wise, free, holy, sovereign, and eternal. The holiness of man is a result of his association with God as an image and resemblance. Since man has the brain, this should have a role in the holiness and that is the freedom of choice. Freedom here is to choose living with God in holiness. When man do not choose to be with God, he loses the holiness and the resemblance to God; the loss of resemblance means that he is not eternal any more and he should eventually die, because there is no life away from God. Therefore when man chooses to lose holiness, he loses the resemblance and the possibility of existence in God; hence he loses the power with which he was created, as God cannot be associated with anything that is not holy. The law that God declared to man is that whenever he gives up his existence with God, he loses the being that God created.

Therefore the commandment was the way in which man show his will to break the relation with God and refuse life with Him. **"...for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:17).** Eating from the fruit is a material action for the rebellion. The factor that made man choose to break the relation is that he wanted

to be like God; a being outside God and like him. He did not believe that out side God there is nothing but death, and he believed the words of the evil one: **"You will not surely die... and you will be like God," (Genesis 3:4).**

❖ The corruption of man:

Man fell and broke the relation with God, as he wanted to be self-sufficient with no submission to God; here God called man **"Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)**. Man was not ready to answer God truthfully about his situation, so he gave excuses of being deceived and of the woman. He revolted that God created the woman and she is the one to blame; that was to finish his disobedience picture.

Man has eyes that look at God in the rebellion of the slave rather than the obedience of the son.

Man became, with his own disobedient will, a fugitive running away from God with all the forms of rebellion throughout the history of mankind. The relation became one of exile and fear. Instead of the situation when God brought man to the secrete of existence to declare to him the fellowship of His power and His eternal love, man became with no power, no eternal life and no freedom.

However since the aim of creating man was love it was inevitable for love to find another way to embrace man with no death and not going astray, at the same time keeping the right of the divine justice in freedom of man and the death penalty that was passed on him. Therefore love was the promise of salvation **"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15)**. The promise was not very clear.

The direct question, “**Where are you?**” was a declaration of the state of felony and disobedience in front of God. Man could not show himself in front of God, as with his corrupted nature he felt that he was naked. In reality that was an inner feeling which man did not know before the sin; these feelings were new to him. However he felt that something has changed that he was unable to face God anymore.

❖ **The blood of sacrifices covers man’s corruption:**

Since God is holy, it is inevitable that man should show himself to God in a form of pure life in order to establish a relation with Him. This was not possible with the corrupt nature of man. He had to come in front of God covered in another pure life; but what pure life can he come through? There was no other life in the universe with man except in the animals, birds and fish. Could the life of animals cover the corruption of man? The answer is “yes, but only temporarily as the animals are not eternal”. Thus the temporary relation could only be as follows: whenever man wanted to show himself to God, he should slaughter an animal and come in the cover of its blood in front of God. Since the life of the animal was in its blood, it was possible for man to come covered with the blood of the animal. That was what God said in Leviticus:

“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.”

(Leviticus 17:11)

However that was only a temporary cover and not an everlasting solution. The animal blood did not have the possibility of real redemption for man and an arrangement to bring him back to God. It did not have the power to change his lost nature after sin, but it

could only made it possible to keep the relation continuous with God through this temporary form. The form pointed to and symbolized also the sacrifice of life for the sinners and qualified man to wait for the real sacrifice that will cover the whole humanity and make redemption and atonement possible later, with Him we can enter the kingdom of heavens.

**“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit”
[1 Peter 3:18]**

Therefore He made the sacrifice as an image and an example of the new relation with Him, as mentioned in Genesis:

“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” [Genesis 3:21]

From here entered humanity the stage of symbols that bear a temporary work that will take its reality from a divine work that is coming which is capable of bringing life to man anew.



❖ **The corrupted will of man and the corruption of the universe:**

Before the fall God was in full control on all the issues of the universe, life and man; life was going on according to His righteous nature. When man fell and declared that his will is in contradiction with the will of God, the kingdom of God was deformed at the level of the material nature. As our teacher St. Paul said in his epistle to the Romans:

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

(Romans 8:18-23)

In order that the kingdom could restore its previous condition it was inevitable that man submits his evil will to the will of God, and that was the secrete behind the delay in the salvation of man along the ages. The kingdom will be taking place when man wants to do the will of God, so the kingdom will be visible. The work of God in planning the life of the kingdom was to prepare the will of man anew with his free will to choose life with Him.

Man left the kingdom through disobedience and with his free will and he is promised to be able to return again through the saviour who comes as the offspring of the woman and restore the kingdom anew. Christ the Lord, to him all the glory, presented himself to humanity as the incarnate God. He did in his being all what man should have done, such as giving up His will and being eager to submit to the Father and fulfil all His intentions in the law of life and with his full freedom and with extreme love all the way to death.

**“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”
(Philippians 2:6-8)**

Thus Jesus has submitted himself on behalf of mankind so that the kingdom will be proclaimed anew in Him and will be stabilized through Him, as in Him full obedience was fulfilled in order to proclaim the kingdom. The new kingdom will no longer be controlled by a human will in order that it could continue as in the story of salvation before Christ the Lord.

❖ **The consequences of fall:**

Day after day, discovered man the consequences of leaving the absolute righteousness and holy life, thus we can see in (Genesis, chapter 4) the scene of violence and evil; man started to hate, kill and hold grudge. In general we can see that the shape of man has changed from that which God created. We see in Cain the will of humanity moving largely in the direction of evil that it became alien to God. God did not make the evil within Cain.

Therefore it was inevitable that God should intervene to keep the salvation in a different way. So He gave Adam another son and called him Enosh, which means human. It seemed that humanity would continue its picture through this new offspring and through that God will fulfil the planning of salvation. The kingdom, or life with God, has become a family kingdom, i.e. delivered from the father to the son and in accordance with the picture of the family and its choice of life with its free will. There were other families that did not submit to the kingdom, those are the offspring of Cain.

In Genesis, chapter 5, the picture of death is proclaimed, the wound through which the life and existence of mankind was bleeding. The wound was never healed no matter how long man lived or how strong he was; therefore we could see in this chapter that the name and age of each one mentioned are followed by the statement that he died.

We arrive to the extreme development of the picture of evil that is described in Genesis, chapter 6:

“The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.”
(Genesis 6: 5, 6)

Evil in man has developed to such a degree that made him live the corruption in all its shapes. Corruption prevailed on everything; even the offspring of Enosh joined the offspring of Cain, so God said:

“The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.”
(Genesis 6:2)

Those imposed the image of the corrupted humanity on earth, thus the judgment of God was:

"My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal" (Genesis 6:3)

This meant that He would not try to bring man back to his way to live in the paths of salvation, as he has become (human) being only. This word in Hebraic means "flesh" only i.e. its spirit has died. The spirit that is not affected by the works and words of God vanishes and dies. This is described in the Bible:

**"The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain."
(Genesis 6:5, 6)**

This means that God saw that man has been completely owned by the evil, wickedness and corruption therefore He grieved and was regretful. This was as if man with his own will leave completely the image in which God created him. So he is no longer the man with the resemblance and the image of God. With his own will he distorted everything and death ruled over everything in him, and it was impossible for him to turn back to the way of salvation and enter into the circle of life again.



❖ **Then what about the humanity that was within God and in His eternal mind? Should it be lost?**

The only way to save humanity was to wait for a man and his family who are capable of carrying the case of salvation that God wanted, and to continue man's life in front of Him and have the free will to live with God. God waited for many generations until He found the righteous Noah who is described in the Bible:

“But Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD...Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God” (Genesis 6:8, 9)

The way out was that God would renew humanity in the image of Noah, so he and his offspring would be the world and the humanity that would be saved. The others who were living have their images changed from what God created; they even became things with no existence since they gave up the image of eternal being with God. Therefore they are described in the Bible:

“Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight (i.e. died) and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways.” (Genesis 6:11, 12)

The whole earth became corrupted because man changed it to a great tomb through his death and he used it in his sin so it was contaminated with him.

As the way of all men became towards corruption that means death, and no one had the way to life and eternity, God said to Noah:

"I am going to put an end to all people, ... I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on

earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark-you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you" (Genesis 6:13, 17, 18)

God wanted to do away with the picture of the corrupted humanity and introduce a possibility of new life through the offspring of Noah the righteous that could preserve the picture of man, which will be saved and who wanted life with God. This would be the picture of humanity that God would come to save, because if all the earth did not want life with God the process of salvation would have come to a stop. For as mentioned before, salvation is bound to two wills: the will of God that never changes and the will of man which is the problematic; therefore God said to Noah:"

**But I will establish my covenant with you,"
(Genesis 6:18)**

This means that Noah will represent humanity in front of God in His covenant of salvation with humanity. Someone might think that God was unkind when He destroyed all humanity that was corrupted and He did not have mercy on those human beings; but wait a little my dear reader.

The way they chose was death; would they have eternal and glorified life after their life on earth? Of course not, because they chose corruption and loved death. They abandoned the picture of spiritual life that submits to the work of God and give eternal and glorified life to man. Therefore, according to the Bible, they became bodies dwelled by evil spirits, as they became guided by Satan's will. Indeed humanity deserted the image of the eternal man to resemble the death of an animal; although the animal fade away with death and the evil man has life after death, but it is a

meaningless life because it is away from God and in everlasting torment, i.e. with no possibility of salvation. Would God have mercy on the faction of Satan who corrupted His creation and with their own will chose death? Their life days were numbered because they were evil and did not have another eternal life.

For that reason it would not matter a lot if they die today or tomorrow. God wanted to eliminate that picture so that there would be hope in the restoration of humanity through Noah. For if those were left with Noah and his offspring, they could have deceived or killed them as they were not like them, and thus humanity could have lost the picture of life with God. Or the whole earth would have been covered with unfairness and vice, and the picture of life with God would have been mere rare smell not proclaimed to anyone in order that salvation could take place. Therefore the only solution, in order for God to guarantee that man would continue on the way of salvation, was the renewal through the flood and keeping the humanity in Noah and his offspring.



❖ **The symbols and shadows of the stage:**

Since the fall of man, he understood that there is a symbolic meaning and shadow for the following issues:

1. The tree that gives life to whoever eats from it:

This symbol takes different forms in each stage until it is completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ when He offered us his body and blood to eat and drink. Then the Revelation reveals the same tree, which is there for eternal life, i.e. life in Jesus Christ, when He said:

**“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”
(Revelation 2:7)**

2. The sacrifice:

Sacrifice became in the mind of humanity as an action by which they come nearer to God’s face. In all religions all over the world before Christ, the sacrifice was the common denominator for all adulation. This confirms that humanity kept this picture from the first man Adam and his offspring.

3. The Ark:

Death was outside the ark, but all those inside were protected. This became later the symbol of the church, and the water that cleansed the earth from the corruption of evil was the waters of baptism that would save those who enter so that their nature is renewed in Jesus Christ to him all the glory.

❖ The personal and life meaning of the stage:

This stage of the path of personal salvation for each one of us is the stage in which we recognize that we have over passed the picture of spiritual innocence. And realize that the thorns of sin have made our souls out of shape, and that we need a deluge to drown whatever is within us of the evil world that is rejected by God. We need to execute this man who has the evil will and tries to impose it on the will of righteousness, love and pure life with God. When God sees that we have within us the righteous Noah, He will establish with us a new covenant. This will happen when we open the way for Him to put to death all the evil of the world and the corruption of Satan that are within us. The fear, all the fear, is when He searches within us and could not find the righteous Noah, then all the nature in front of Him will be evil and with no will for salvation.

Therefore my dear...

Try to keep within you the features that proclaim the existence of will for life with Him,

Try to clutch with your soul's Noah, as for his sake God will save you from the deluge of death and the decree of destruction.

Thus He is ready to establish a new covenant with the image of His beloved man.



🕯 *Prayer* 🕯

Can I talk to you after my fall?!

Would you look at my face and listen to my voice?!

I no longer carry your likeness...

My life no longer proclaims your love...

I have wounded myself and your image...

I have distorted my beauty and insulted you ...

Now I have nothing but my tears to ask for mercy ...

I have nothing but your blood to cover me...

But what confusion ...

Should I ask you to be crucified on my behalf?!!

To be offended and taste pain on my behalf?!!

I love you but ...

Could I enter into your wounds and your pain?!

You die so that I can live and be your son!

That is the secret of my corruption...

That is the secret of the redeemer ...

I insulted you with death ...

And with your death you restored life in me... Amen

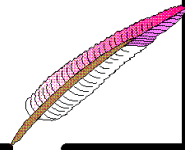


CHAPTER THREE

THE SCATTERING OF THE WORLD AND THE SEARCH FOR MATERIALISTIC GODS

The second stage: From the Flood to Abraham

- ☆ The Divinely Planning and the Story of Man in this stage.
- ❖ The altar and the covenant are the bases of the relation with God.
- ❖ Corruption comes back.
- ❖ The new gods after the scatter of mankind.
- ❖ Who is the greatest among the gods on earth?
- ❖ The conditions to be fulfilled in the person from whom the people of God would emerge.
- ❖ From the general conscious to the unique people.
- ❖ This stage in the Bible.





The second stage

From the Flood (Deluge) to Abraham

☆ *The Divinely Planning and the Story of Man in this stage*

❖ **The altar and the covenant are the bases of the relation with God**

Humanity had a new image in front of God after the flood, and a new era of salvation began. As we have seen that it was impossible for man to stand in front of God after sin without a sacrifice. Man started his relation with God after the flood by sacrificing animals so that God smells the pleasing aroma, when he said:

“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.

And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

(Genesis 8: 20 –22)

So man had to keep this new blessing:

“Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.”

(Genesis 9:1)

He should hold very closely to God and to life with Him, rejecting evil and the connection to darkness anew, until God comes as a saviour to man and free him from the death verdict. What remained of humanity after the flood had a new picture, and

God saw that life and salvation with man is possible; He even made a new covenant of life with him.

"I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you" (Genesis 9:9)

❖ **Corruption comes back:**

The children of Noah did not carry the image of salvation as their father, as his grandchildren rejected, with their free will, to be attached to God and they loved darkness more than light. The evil nature in them moved, and their conscious and the dealings of God with them and with their fathers did not help in keeping them away from evil. They saw that God wants to be in charge of them and deprive them of their freedom to choose evil. They gathered together and thought of a way with which they can escape from the control of God; all that attached them to God was their fear from a new deluge. They finally found a way to build a high tower and gathered together to declare that they have found the solution for disobeying God without the fear of flood. The solution was to build a very high tower that reaches the sky thus they can do whatever they like and reject God and challenge Him. Thus they can be encased with darkness with no fear from God's power, and if God brought the flood again, they can get into the tower and if the water rises they go up the next floor higher in the tower until they reach the highest floor that is at the top of the clouds. With this solution they were sure that the flood that affected their evil forefathers would not affect them. (Genesis 11:1-5).

This was a collective declaration by man that he rejected to move along the path with God. It was another picture of the declaration of the will of man to rebel again, thus the case returned to the inevitability of death and the ruin of man anew. But how

would God allow the devastation after He had promised man with salvation? The promises and judgments of God are firm and non-reversible and He does not concede. God promised that He would not destruct man again as happened under the deluge, but how would salvation continue with the collective will of man to refuse life with God and do the evil? Therefore God said:

**"If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."
(Genesis 11:6-8)**

This means that since they had one will because they are one group, it was inevitable to scatter them so that the rest will not be driven into the will of evil unknowingly or without a real choice. Since God did not want to devastate them, as He had promised, there should have been another action by which God could save humanity as a general nature from the behaviours of evil individuals at a specific time. Therefore He scattered them into peoples, groups and tribes so that evil would not spread over the entire world. He gave each group a different language, thus the world became scattered by the evil they chose. It was expected, after they have been scattered in the world, that each individual would look back at his life through the action of God away from the effects of the collective evil. However the families that had the same language moved away and were not affected by what God did in Babylon and each group became so involved in the new world and man forgot that he had to establish the relation with God who created him, loved him and promised him the salvation to the entire world.

☆ *The new gods after the scatter of mankind:*

Those who have been scattered knew God as a creator and mighty power, but they lack the personal relation with Him and their love to Him. They knew Him, but from afar. Therefore the grand sons asked their grand fathers the questions that came across the mind of each man born in the world.

Who is the creator? Who are we? Why do we die? What happens after death?

Facing these coherent challenges, religion was the inevitable answer to the challenge of destiny and derivation. There were no authentic and reliable answers about God as humanity has lost the relation with Him. The answers were no more than human culture that was inherited from the forefathers, and that was a mixture of true stories with additions of aspects from the effects of the environment and the results of the human brain. The religious stories all over the world were centred on the existence of a mighty God who created the universe; because of sin, man was expelled from paradise with a promise of salvation. When evil increased, God became angry and sent a devastating deluge but saved one family only in the ark. When God is pleased man will be protected and when He is angered man will suffer and be tired. The bloody sacrifice was the way to worship Him.

These stories made each and every people think of the existence of god in a different way, based on the inherited stories and in accordance with the point of view of the forefathers. Some peoples saw god as the creator, the saviour and the power of goodness. Since they did not know Him, they looked for the image of goodness to worship Him in it or worship it in Him. Others understood from the stories that god is a mighty devastating power that should be avoided and they need to be careful of the

devastating evil, thus they looked for the powers that destruct man in nature and worshiped them in order to avoid their evil.

❖ **The legends and the pictures of the man-made gods:**

Each people built its own stories that grant this god a real existence in front of the people. These stories are the legends of the peoples that share the following similar basic axes: Creation – Fall – A promise of Salvation – Flood – Inevitability of obedience to god. These axes did take place for the forefathers with God and are inherited from them even though the reality is distorted because the relation with God was severed.

Not all the legends were mythical but they were the way in which peoples described the supernatural things that could not be fully expressed in their languages or to specify their faith in an obvious comprehensible way. This was the result of the peoples being away from the relation with the true God.

The earlier man knew God very well and this knowledge was inherited by his offspring; when humanity was scattered this cultural knowledge was also scattered and each people reconstructed the knowledge in the form of legendary stories that were suitable for teaching and bringing the picture of god closer to the people.

Therefore we find that most of the legends in all the civilizations have similar roots. They had some fixed elements which emphasized that they had the same source and the reality of the theme. For example, the legend of (Isis) of the pharaohs that gave birth to (Horus) by a divine power which fought (Seth) the evil one and restored the throne of (Osiris) that was raised from the dead

and became the king of eternity. We can find the same idea in the legend of (Demeter) of Greece, the legend of (Siris) of the Romans and the legend of (Gilgamesh) of Babylon.

It is very astonishing that some of the scholars find some similarity between the book of Genesis and some of the legends, and conclude that Moses the prophet was inspired by the legends and put down some of them into the book. The logic is completely the other way around, because we find a general similarity in the important legends of all the peoples that specifies the relation with God and it looks as follows: the entire world had the true idea about God then they were scattered and put down the legends about the inherited facts; that explains the similarity between them because they have some of the truth but with enormity of legendary thoughts and pictures that distorted the original facts. So God talked to Moses the prophet to tell him about the truth that was there long before any of the legends.

Therefore it was expected that a similarity could be found between the legends and the book of Genesis, because the truth that was clearly declared to Moses resembled the facts that were with the peoples but somewhat distorted; the source was the same which were the actual events.

We will present some of the examples of these gods and the legends that man put down at that time away from our true God as a result of his need to divinity as a power and meaning. The legends will be presented here without comments from me, but each of the legends needs a vision and enlightenment to discover its depths in the thoughts of reality.

☞ ***The civilization of Sumer and Babylon:***

In the southern part of Mesopotamia there was an ancient civilization known as the Sumerian civilization where the archaeological works revealed written documents dating 2300 BC such as:

*“Oh Sumer the great land among all the lands of the universe
You are flooded with ever glowing light,
You pas the divinely laws to every people from east to west”.*

As mentioned earlier, any civilization had to answer the metaphysical questions, so they initiated the legends that tells about these matters and worshiped a god they called “The Sumerian Pantheon”. They said, “When the royal authority came down from heaven, the gods made the rituals and the supreme laws”. The Pantheon is the god that controls nature and puts man under its mercy.

There are other legends that reflect their understanding of salvation, immortality and eternal life. There were kings/ gods such as (Meseka Nkasheer) who is the son of the god of the sun. He came down and built a holy city (Lo Kalbando); he was half god and a shepherd. There was god (Demosi) which was a god that dies and comes to life again.

As much as man could think of the existence of God and of his image, there were huge numbers of gods. Babylon by itself used to worship (6500) gods; each village used to have its own god to protect it. However they all believed that there was a gigantic god for all the gods whose name was (No), and then another god appeared whose name was (Murdock). He was victorious over all other gods and became the mightiest among them. This god created man and brought the deluge on the earth.

☞ ***The epic of Gilgamesh in Babylon:***

This legend dates back to more than 3000 BC. Gilgamesh was a person formed of two-thirds divine and one-third man. He managed to know the secrets of the universe and the stories of the events that took place before the deluge. He was the offspring of (Shams Neshtin) the only creature that survived the flood and who knew all the secrets. Gilgamesh's friend (Enkidu) died and he became very sad; they used to fight a huge ox that was sent to them by the goddess of evil (Ishtar). The picture of death became very ugly and frightening and he started thinking of a way to concur death. The only possible way to that was by knowing the secret of immortality, which could only be obtained if he could reach his great grandfather (Shams Neshtin) who knew all the secrets.

Gilgamesh started a terrifying and risky journey to reach his great grandfather. He battled beasts and met many dangers. The journey took forty days and forty nights. At the end he found himself in front of a small island where his immortal grandfather lived. Upon arrival to the island, he was exhausted, worn-out, and seriously ill; he fell in his boat in front of his great grandfather. While he was struggling with death he begged his grandfather to give him the secret of immortality. The grandfather answered that death is the end of each and every human being and no one can grasp the secret of immortality or the time of his end.

Gilgamesh said:” I look like you exactly, so how could I die while you are my grandfather and I am your offspring and you know the secret of immortality and you let me die?”

The grandfather started telling him the stories of creation, flood, death and immortality; when he finished the story, Gilgamesh fell of exhaustion at the bottom of the boat. The grandfather was in pain to see his grandson dying and he promised to restore life in

him again. The immortal grandfather brought the seven holy elements and dropped between the lips of Gilgamesh who slept for seven days; when he woke up he asked his grandfather to give him the secret of immortality. The grandfather took him down to the fountain of the holy water to cleanse him off the corruptions of his past life. Gilgamesh asked again for the secret of immortality so the immortal grandfather took him to where the plant of immortality was and he got it. This is the plant that whoever eats it will have his life restored and be granted immortality⁽¹⁾. Gilgamesh returned to battle evil anew. On his return journey to the earth he was carrying the plant of immortality

☞ ***The Persian civilization***

They believed in the existence of one great god from whom all things come; that was Hermes the god of light and goodness. He was capable of everything; whatever he thought of would definitely materialize. Once he thought of the possibility of having a competitor, so suddenly the god of darkness and evil (Eherman) appeared. The god of goodness created all the angles and human beings to help him in his fight against his rival (Eherman). The god of evil tried to encourage the human beings to join him; thus the struggle between good and evil began.



⁽¹⁾ Consider carefully the important ideas given in the epic such as the seven holy elements that could conquer death, the holy water that is the fountain of life and the holy plant, which grants eternal life to whoever eats it.

☞ ***The Indian civilization***

The Indians worshipped a god called (Mythra); the Persians also worshipped him. He is the god of agriculture, fertility and life. They believed that he annually gets into battle with the god of death and darkness. In these battles he faced capture and martyrdom on a cross. Thus the earth would face drought and the living creatures would stop giving birth; but he would rise again from the dead so spring would spread all over the earth after the glorious resurrection⁽¹⁾ and the earth would be joyful and full of life anew.

☞ ***The civilization of the philosophers and the pharaohs***

The Greek philosophers tried to find the answers to the metaphysical questions using the logical reasoning. Even though they did not know the nature of God, they came to some conclusions and logical necessities that should stand firm when thinking of divinities.

They said that the existence of a great creating god is inevitable, and that the entire universe should be the creation of a single god who has no beginning or end. They could not accept that this god could be idle or inactive, but he should be in continuous working and knowledge condition. However even with this logical and important conclusion about the divine truth, they could not know him personally because these matters were nothing but thoughts. This is in contradiction with other civilizations such as the Pharaohs who tried to establish a relation with the picture they

⁽¹⁾ It is for the dear reader to consider the timing of the resurrection of Christ the Lord, to him all the glory, which takes place just after spring.

thought of. They made out of their own visualizations some divine truths, which they believed in and called the people to do the same; they even built the legends and stories around these truths to make them more comprehensible by the people. Strangely enough they considered these truths as if they were inherited from the culture of a real divinely world. They were trying to search for a picture to describe god, so they took pictures from the nature that could express their divinely thoughts and they preached the manifestation of god in these pictures and worshipped them.

For example they worshipped the ox, but they fully understood that god is not the ox as nature. They actually believed that god created everything, so how could he be limited and created. They were not bothered by the inconsistency of all the sides of the picture with what they saw as the divine features; it was enough for them to establish a relation with one aspect of the divine in the example that could draw them nearer to the god that was living among them. That was due to the weak relation with the true God while their need to Him was so great.

For example they worshipped the sun in many eras and gave it the name of the great god (Ra) then (Aton) during the era of (Akhenaton).

Here is a prayer to the god (Ra) in which the worship is clearly felt.

“The lord of eternity who does not stop passing the years

Who has no limit to the time of his life

The aged whose youth is restored

Who never stops crossing the eternal vacuum

The elderly god who kept himself young

In front of the numerous eyes and many ears.”

That is how they used to mix between the tangible and limited matters and the divine thoughts that are neither tangible nor limited.

In the writings of the theologians of Heliopolis which are still kept in the Egyptian museums, they used to say:

*“Atom the god who in the beginning created himself by himself
And came to being by himself”*

Thus we can see that god in their minds was unlimited regardless of the limitation in the symbol, but they used to establish a relation with the symbol to give them the possibility of manifesting the divine idea that was within them. They worshipped animals such as calve and crocodile as symbols of power; the cow ,the goose, the goat and the ram as symbols of life. They worshipped the cat, the dog, the chicken, the fox and the snake as symbols of the unknown power. In other eras they worshipped other gods with their own names but they kept their material picture of the animal such as the god Amon who was symbolised by the ram and the god Horus who was symbolised by the hawk.



They had very important glimpses that made them visualize important facts which prepared their minds to receive the work of the true God. For example in “The Book of the Dead”, chapter 85 that dates back to 2000 BC, the god says:

“I came to existence by myself over the eternal waters”⁽¹⁾

In the book of pyramids texts, in paragraph (1146), the god says:

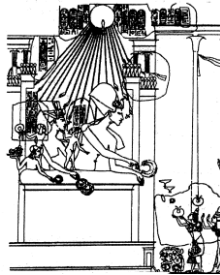
“I am the overflow of the eternal blood

That proceeded from the waters

I am the one who writes the holly book

That tells what was and makes what is to come”

There were some glimpses of the divine facts that God often sent to them in accordance with their level of understanding and according to the way they think. For example during the era of the modern dynasty they believed that (Amon) was the great god. The word (Amon) means the “concealed god”; they believed that the divine powers were represented by three gods: (Amon, Ra and Betah); they believed that (Amon) is the name of the god and (Ra) is the face and (Betah) is the body.



⁽¹⁾ Compare between this idea and the beginning of Genesis.

They also believed that Amon is the great concealed god, Ra is the god of the sun that radiates and Betah is the creating god of the entire world who formed his visible picture while he was creating in his mind and tongue (utterance and word); they manifested him in the image of a man with a tightly wrapped dress around him.

With the development of the Pharaohs divine thoughts god Betah who is Isoris the god of immortality, rose after death and is the giver of life.

In a marvellous song known as “The Song of Leden” they said to god Amon:

*“That whose image started the first
Amon who gave birth to himself
In the beginning with no one knowing his secret
No god was before him
There was no other god to tell him about his shape
He had no mother to give him a name
He had no father and said here I am
The mighty with the riddled birth
That created his own beauty
The god that came into existence on his own
He is concealed from the gods and his look is not known
He is farthest than the sky
He is deeper than hell
His picture does not appear in the folded books*

*Man has no complete witness about him
He is so concealed that even his glory does not show
He is bigger than trying and greater than knowing
Man would fall dead right away
Of fear if he mentioned his concealed name
That no one can be acquainted with it
Your beauty possesses the hearts
Your love makes the arms fall
Your perfect shape leaves the hands powerless
The hearts forget everything because it looked at you”*

There is another song for the god Betah in which they say:

*“I know his name
His name is immortality
Immortality the lord of years is his name
The esteemed over the cellar of the sky
The one who daily restores life in the sun”*

In one of the coffins texts, the following marvellous song to god Betah was also found:

*“It is I; I am the creator
That is seated on the topmost of the sky
No other god dwells next to me
I am the living spirit with the simple face*

*I am the good word
I am the saviour ⁽¹⁾
And will save everything”*

There is a very strange verse about god Betah as it resembles the true thought proclaimed in the Torah about the creation; they say concerning god Betah:

“Then Betah rested after he has created everything and each holly word”

In chapter 17 of “The book of the dead”, the following wonderful text, attributed to the great god, is found:

*“The word came to being
It was everything to me when I was alone
I was Ra in all his early manifestations
I was the great who came to being by my own power
No other god could ever challenge me”*

These are some of the thoughts put into songs and their faith that is recorded in “The book of the dead”, the pyramids texts and others. But there is something that is closer to the people, namely the legends that were taught to the people through the groups’ rituals in which these legends were told. Sometimes they used to present these legends in the form of plays while they were offering their sacrifices to the gods.

Here are some examples of the legends:

⁽¹⁾ We should consider the idea of salvation and how it was linked to the god in the thoughts of the peoples.

▪ **The legends of creation**

God Ra who is symbolized by the sun is always the creating god. When he shined for the first time and saw the earth as a barren desert, he flooded it with his rays and set it on action so out of his eyes came all the living creatures: plants animals and human beings. The first human beings created were happy and perfect, but their offspring went gradually astray. God became angry and destructed a great number of the human beings and they lost all that they had of perfection and happiness.

▪ **Another legend for the creation and the flood**

The sky was connected to the earth when man rebelled against the gods that used to live among them. Corruption increased among men to the point where god Ra became very angry and decided to inflict vengeance on them. After a flood of blood he forgave those men who kept his covenant but nevertheless god Ra stopped mixing with men and separated the sky from the earth and dwelled up in the sky.



▪ **A legend for the consequences of sin**

When the evil of men increased, they despised god (Ra) and stopped following his commandments, he became angry and decided to leave the monarchy to his son (Shaw)⁽¹⁾ and said to him: *“I am leaving the monarchy to you so you should continue my will and take over everything, and you my daughter (Noot)⁽²⁾ carry your father on your back and leave him hanging over the earth”*. (Noot) tried to object but she gave in to the wish of the great god and was transformed into a cow and carried her father (Ra) on her large back. Next morning the people discovered that (Ra) has left his place and when they looked above, they saw a huge divine cow with the angry god on its back. (Ra) was so angry with the people and the earth that he left. The people worshipped him and asked in suppliant to stay on the earth but he refused. They swore to him that there would not be anyone who could make him angry or disobey his commandments; they killed in front of him all those who angered him and rejected his wishes.

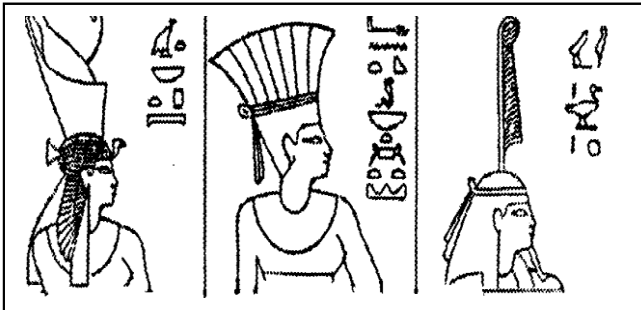
The massacre did not last long until god (Ra) shouted: “Stop, your sins are forgiven”, so his followers stopped killing the evil ones. They swore before him that they would kill anyone who dares to despise the god so that he will never be angry again. They would present who ever commits a sin as a sacrifice and an oblation to god (Ra). However (Ra) was merciful to his children the human beings so he could not stand seeing them sacrificing each other and present human oblations to please him and seek his forgiveness of their sins. He thus decided to replace the sinners with sacrifices of oxen and birds instead of the human beings. The priest who is

⁽¹⁾ Shaw is the god of the air for the Pharaohs.

⁽²⁾ Noot is the goddess of the sky.

presenting the oblation must pray certain prayers, which makes the animals replace the sinners. After that (Ra) rode on the back of the divine cow (Noot) and she rose up with him and bent herself and extended her belly as a dome that became later the blue sky covering the universe. (Ra) started scattering the stars on its surface to light the night.

That is how the legends played an important role in explaining the metaphysical issues and the questions related to the god and the universe. Even though there were some issues that we see nowadays as very naïve, but that is because we do not know and see the truth in its fullness. They were like babies in their divine understanding; it was inevitable to show them these not-sensible issues as if they were sensible in order to be able to live with the god as a reality.



■ Judgement after death

In the thoughts of the pharaohs, each man stands in front of the god to submit the account of his deeds. Osiris was the one to give immortality; that is why the person used to stand in front of him saying ⁽¹⁾:

*“You who speeds up the wings of time
You who dwells in all the mysteries of life
You who count each word that comes out of my mouth
Look at me, you are shy of me and I am your child
Your heart is full of grief and bashfulness
Because I have committed so many sins in this world that fills
the heart with grief
And I have stretched in my evil and harrying
Won't you have peace with me? Won't you have peace with me?
And break the barriers between you and me
And say that all my sins are forgiven and dropped
Forgotten on your right and left
Yes cross out all my evil
And wipe out the dishonour that fills my heart
So that you and I shall be in peace from this moment.”*

⁽¹⁾ From the book of the dead in the pyramids.

■ Akhenaton and the greatest enlightenment of the Pharaohs

In the early years of Akhenaton the god was portrayed as a man with the head of a falcon, or in some other images. Akhenaton made a revolution in the religious thinking; and we shall see that it was not comprehended that they killed Akhenaton to return to the earlier thinking. What happened to Akhenaton is definitely a case of divine enlightenment, as no one in that period could have such thought without a declaration. In the tomb of Ramsis the minister of Akhenaton, **the later says:**

“The words of Ra, I give unto you

The god taught them to me and uncovered their secrets to me

My heart knew these words and rejoiced for them”

The minister answers:

“You are the only one chosen by Aton

To give him his instructions

Your fear fills the hearts of people

The mountains listen to you as people do”

Akhenaton called for worshipping one god and no one else, as god is only one and there are no other gods. God cannot be portrayed in an image, or be portrayed in something; he is unlimited under any condition and he should be worshiped with love and peace. Akhenaton descended from his throne and toured the cities and villages preaching that. However the Pharaohs vast empire had many enemies, they attacked Egypt when they heard the news about Akhenaton. He did not fight back, and his army rebelled against him in addition to the rebel of the priests of Amon because he closed all the temples of the other gods and halted their

worship. He raised the prominence of Aton the god that no one could imagine. This spread the revolution against him which ended in the killing of Akhenaton in 1362 B.C. according to one of the historical estimations.

▪ **A prayer of Akhenaton**

*“You are in my heart
No one knows you except your son
You have revealed your secrets and power to Ra
You have produced your glory
As you produce yourself daily without interruption
You have created it as your rays
To make his life like Aton’s
Oh Aton the living unique
You are eternity
The sky is your temple
That shines in you every day
To give birth to your son
That emerged from your body
You are the eternity and your son likewise”*



We notice here that in spite of the great enlightenment that entered into the mind and heart of Akhenaton, we find that he is still affected by the Pharaoh's wording and could not get rid of that entirely as it was the theological wording of that era. Nevertheless man still needs the spiritual relation with God as a natural need and is attracted to it and gets filled with it as we shall see from the prayers of Akhenaton.

▪ **A prayer of Akhenaton**

“How amazing is your appearance in the horizon of the sky

The living Aton the initiator of life

If you rise in the eastern horizon

You fill the entire earth with your prettiness

You are marvellous, great, glowing

High above all heads

No matter how far you go your rays will deluge the earth

No matter how high you go your footsteps are the day

When you go down in the western horizon

The entire earth will be in the darkness of death

How incredible is the earth when you shine in the horizon

You have created the germ in the woman

You have made the seed in the man

You are the giver of life to the son in the body of god

You are the sole god that no one else has the authority like his

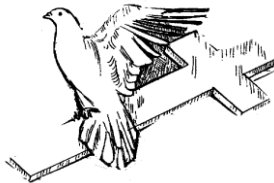
You have created the earth as your heart wishes

*When you were alone
How great are your plans
You are the god of eternity
You are in my heart
No one knows you
Except your son Akhenaton
You have made him wise
With your plans and your power
The world is in your hand
If you shine life will commence in it
Because you yourself is life
And people obtain life from you”*

Some scholars found that the prayers of Akhenaton are similar to David’s Psalms, and said that David took the prayers of Akhenaton and rephrased them, however the Egyptologist Wallace Budge discovered that the songs of Akhenaton fits with the songs of Alfida the Syrian; so had Alfida also copied the songs of Akhenaton and rephrased them? This is not rational. However when the feelings of love and worship are presented to God, whether they are from Akhenaton, Alfida or David the prophet, we should definitely find some similarity in the thoughts and feelings. When the heart of man is enlightened with the divine love the meanings of he words will be similar in so many things as they are describing the reality. As Akhenaton said: **“I am the one living the truth”**.

It is not possible to present all the gods of the Babylonians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Romans Greek and the gods of the numerous tribes. These are just examples of how various peoples think of their essential issues; they imposed the way God dealt with these peoples. History tells us that since the scatter of peoples (from Babylon) to the third thousand BC the peoples were on the move as a result of the changes in the great empires. These empires forced the worship of their great gods as they imposed their military and political control.

Therefore when God told Moses to write the Genesis the goal was to declare the reality of events and thoughts about God, and rinse man from the remains left from the legends of the gods that were all over the world. This will leave only the reality of faith, as man did not loose his faith in the existence of God; but as a result of being far away from Him, the faith was distorted. God was with the peoples as a fact, but they made him as a subject; and man began to make the god of tangible material such as stone, sea, sun or moon because he did not know Him well enough. As man became more civilized the god that he formed in his mind became greater, more exalted and non materialistic. We can see that the gods of the civilized nations have civilized images and those of the non-civilized nations were feral. The gods of the nations that had thought and logic used to give wisdom and dwelled high as the gods of the Greek.



☆ *Who is the greatest among the gods on earth?*

Facing the multitude of gods' images, it was inevitable to answer the question about who is the greatest among the numerous gods of the nations. As was mentioned earlier there were 6500 gods in Babylon only; and a similar number in the countries around the Mediterranean. So who was the first creator of everything? There must be a greater god of all the rest who has made the origin of things and life. Each nation wanted to have one of its gods as the greatest among the gods of all other nations. Therefore the nations agreed indirectly on a criterion of favouring and knowing the greatest god. The criteria immersed from the materialistic way of thinking that was limited to the tangible matters in life.

❖ **The criteria for the greatest god were that he is the one that gives his nation:**

1. *The power and victory in wars against other nations:* The wars between the nations were thus considered as sacred wars; victories were recorded in the temples and offerings were presented to the gods after victory. Armies used to have the gods lifted up during the war because from them they used to obtain the power to achieve victory.

2. *Wealth, glory, and abundance to the kingdom:* The nations used to boast about their riches and make the temples for the gods of very precious material and assign names of the gods to cities to show that richness.

3. Wisdom and philosophical minds to the kings and priests: The priests used to be the wise men of the nations as they were closest to the gods, or in fact they used to convey the thoughts of god to the peoples.

Thus any people wishing to prove that their gods are the greatest should prove that he is capable of giving power and victory, richness and abundance in the harvest and teaches them wisdom and knowledge. That was the axis of the development of the thought of humanity after the scatter in Babylon.

Coming back to the planning of salvation we can conclude that it was impossible for the world and the peoples to now the real God. Each nation was extremely fond of their god; even going into wars with other nations to prove that their god is the greatest. They would never give up their national god. This is very clear in the story of Akhenaton who tried to obliterate one of the nation's gods and his followers rebelled and killed him. With this situation the only way for God was to come down to the level of the human way of thinking and their imaginations of the declarations of the existence of God through wars, richness and wisdom.

However there still remains a major problem, namely how would God declare himself among all these gods to free man from such thoughts that represent a barrier which prevents man from grasping the truth and be saved through the planned redemption?

God could not take one of the existing peoples and declare himself to them and then lift them in the mid of the world to inform the other peoples **for two reasons:**

1. This chosen people was already known for the entire world as having their previous gods. Helping this people would seem as if God has raised their false gods to be acknowledged by the world.
2. The people will not give up their previous gods as it would have the feeling of a national superiority among other peoples, and they might even attach the names of their national gods to God and his deeds.

The only solution is a new special people to bear the plan of salvation.

Thus the planning of salvation faced an important inevitability in order that God would be declared in the mid of the world. That is by choosing a new people through a person or an individual. God will reveal himself to this person, know him very well then free him of all his ties with the gods of the peoples. He will start from his offspring a people for Himself; He will increase this people and strengthen them and establish with them a strong relation that enables them to know Him. After that He will declare Himself to the entire world through them. The world shall realise that He is the God, the creator of the universe and there is no one beside Him and he is the giver of the promise of salvation. The world will believe in him through his deeds with his people; his power will be noticeable among all other peoples by way of their wars against this people and his victory depending on the power of God.

Thus the world will return to his faith in God and declare the human obedience that entitles them to receive the salvation which God made through the incarnation and redemption; that is why God said to Joshua about his wars with other peoples:

“He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.” (Joshua 4:24)

God also said to his people Israel:

“For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands. But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him.” (Deuteronomy 7:6-10)

Thus his people used to see him as great by way of his deeds and power; they used to say to him:

**“for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?”
(Deuteronomy 3:24)**

From what has been mentioned, we can conclude that the wars which the people of God went through were the pictures drawn by man in these eras to proclaim the great gods, so God had no alternative but to come down to this level. He chose a people that proclaim Him to the world such that the world should know that He is God and no one else. Thus the world should leave the evil and adhere to God and wait his coming to save them. See also: Deuteronomy 1:28, 9:4-6, 14:1-2, 29:24 and 1. Samuel 12:22.



❖ **The conditions to be fulfilled in the person from whom the people of God would emerge**

Who would be the person to be chosen by God to make from him the people in which salvation will be prepared for the entire world? God started looking all over the earth until He found Abraham the righteous. This is fit to be taken from his land and home and make with him a covenant of salvation for the entire world; he is described by St. Paul the apostle as follows:

“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”

(Galatians 3:8)

God did not choose a specific people to be saved and leave the rest of the world, but a people to whom He will reveal himself and save the entire world through them; He said to his people:

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine”

(Exodus 19:5)

God’s eyes were on the entire globe and not on a specific people only; He has chosen Abraham as the person to keep the faith, obedience and love to God and teach his children to become the children of God in the mid of the world. They will proclaim God as the creator of heaven and earth to the entire world; that is why God described Abraham as:

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”

(Genesis 18:19)

Therefore the person through whose offspring God is going to make his people should be capable of teaching his children all his important characteristics for salvation. The children should keep these characteristics which are:

Faith - Obedience - Love - Departing the gods of other peoples

❖ From the general conscious to the unique people

The planning of salvation started taking a new form in preparing humanity to knowing God. Salvation used to deal with the world through what is known as “the general conscious”, and then God started declaring his existence through a people. That was possible due to the development of the human mind in dealing with God, which imposed a new way of God’s dealing with man.

Yes, my dear reader, God dealt with our freedom to such a limit that He came down to the level of our way of thinking and our poor dealings; to the level where the world imposed their way of proclaiming God. So when God wanted to talk to Abimelech in his story with Abraham He said about Sara: “

**“...for she is a man’s wife.”
(Genesis 20:3)**

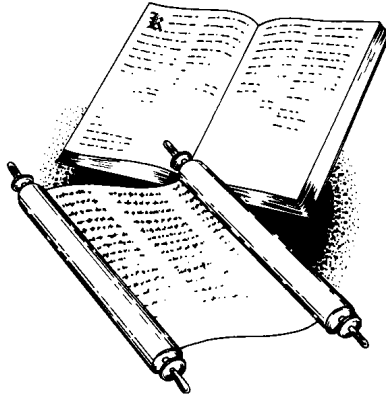
The “man” is the picture of the god that they used to worship and God wanted to tell him that she is married to the “man of God”, but Abimelech could not understand that unless it is presented by way of his beliefs, so He told him that she is married to a man.

Thus we can see that God wanted the entire world, not only a group restricted to a people, kind or nation. What confirms this understanding is that God sent Jonah the prophet to the gentile people of Nineveh and showed them that He cares for their salvation also. However the planning of salvation has moved from the general dealing with humanity as a whole to the special dealing with a specific people. God revealed himself, his will and the way of salvation of humanity to this people. That is why He sent Jonah the prophet to Nineveh and did not talk to them directly, as He

looked to his people in that period as the representatives of humanity in front of Him; He told his people whatever He wanted to convey to the entire world and it was expected that his people would tell the world to lead them into faith and to enter the close association of salvation and eternal life with God.

☆ *This stage in the Bible*

This stage is covered in the Bible, Genesis - chapter 9 till the end of the book where we can see the choice of God's people through Abraham then his movements to be liberated from the gentiles and finally the shift of the promise of salvation from Abraham to Isaac then to Jacob and from him to the tribes.



🕯 *Prayer* 🕯

How great is your love O Lord
You have endured so much
Because of your godhead to us
And your fatherhood to man
Who by way of his ignorance left you and went astray
In the darkness of wasteland and the horror of mountains
So when he saw the prominence and enormity of the mountain,
he worshiped it
When he was afraid of the darkness of the wilderness he
worshiped the unknown
When he was burned with fire and felt apprehensive of it
He thought that it bears power of its own
So he worshiped it
Thus we are always driven by ignorance
On ways outside your love
But now I am addressing your love to me
For which you did all this
That you may reach out to me on my way of ignorance
That you may look for me in my wandering I



That you may protect me from the darkness of my night
That you may lighten in a sky that I see and follow you
That you may touch my heart that I listen to you
That you may cover me with a robe to hide the nudity of my sin
Grant me the warmth after the chillness of time

My Lord

May I know you? And you know me

In spite of my ignorance and evil

O my Lord

You who have walked for the sake of man

In these narrow and wild paths

You who came down to the level of thought of the ignorant to
make yourself known to them

I am standing behind the curtains of darkness and waiting

The light of knowing you so that you shall lift me up to you

That I dare with this personal knowledge to enter

To the companionship of your sky, your love and your holiness

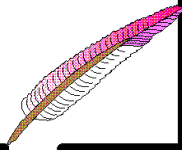
Amen...

CHAPTER FOUR

GOD DECLARES HIMSELF THROUGH HIS PEOPLE

The third stage: From Abraham to the Promised Land

- ☆ The Divine Planning and the Story of Man in this Stage:
 - ☆ How would God declare Himself?
 - ❖ Where should the people live?
 - ❖ How would this people declare the existence of God all over the globe?
- ☆ The Scriptures that covers this stage.





The third stage

From Abraham to the Promised Land

☆ *The Divine Planning and the Story of Man in this Stage:*

It was seen in the previous stage how man failed in presenting a general will for his salvation that could be used by God to complete the salvation of man and his redemption. The corruption of man's will was evident; it was subject to the control of evil as man allowed that.

The planning of salvation in the previous two stages was centred on the general work to save man. However when man went away from God he assumed a divine picture from nature and put gods in his own imagination. He magnified and elevated these gods and attributed to them the power during wars, the richness of the people and the wisdom of the wise men.

In this way God's love to man became enclosed in this materialistic picture to reveal himself.

Since this was a weak link in the relation of man with God, it was inevitable that God should come down to this level then lift up the conception and faith to the level of spiritualities. It was necessary that God comes down to the war fields with a new people that have not worshiped any god of other nations, in order that no victory would be attributed to that god. This people should be well known among other peoples as worshiping the one almighty God, and no other god. This people would then engage in wars against the other great gods and after his victory with the power of God, the world would start listening to Him carefully; then He would

start teaching them and declare his existence and the salvation that would eventually be fulfilled in his incarnate son.

We saw in the previous stage that God chose Abraham to establish from him his people amidst other peoples, as he had the humanitarian potentials that suit the salvation. Abraham had the personal will that could make him a symbol to the humanity that was longing to live with God. For all that, God revealed himself to Abraham and took him out of his people and gave him the promise of salvation in the form of blessings given to his children. God guided him amidst other peoples and tribes. Wherever Abraham dwelled, God gave him richness and power in front of the peoples and tribes so that they valued him very much.

Isaac inherited the blessing and the promise, and then Jacob inherited the blessing and the promise. Jacob had twelve sons which are the tribes of the people of God.

God started preparing the plan to introduce his people through which He would reveal himself; for that purpose the following should have been fulfilled:

1. The entire world should know this new people which worship a god different from all other gods on earth.
2. It should be known that this people has no power of its own, so that when God works with them no one should ever think that they won because of the power of their men.
3. This people should fight the mightiest gods represented in the greatest peoples; when victory is achieved that would be a declaration that God is the greatest among all the gods of other peoples.

4. Then at the end God would reveal himself to the entire world. He would have a special and permanent location amidst the world so that whoever wants to know him could come to this place and listen to what they have to say about the salvation, the anticipated Messiah, incarnation, redemption and eternal life. Thus the world would believe and remain in that faith until Christ comes and everyone enters into the communion of salvation.

☆ *How would God declare Himself?*

The story is so marvellous and amazingly precise in planning. God used the evil in the brothers of Joseph the son of Jacob to sell him to a caravan that was going to Egypt, as Egypt was one of the great nations thus their gods should also be great. The theological thought in Egypt was very much advanced, so the declaration to them would have a better response and understanding than any other people.

Joseph came to Egypt and the very famous story unfolds, where Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret the dream but Joseph. The Pharaoh lifted Joseph status very high in the dynasty that he assumed full control on the entire foodstuff in Egypt. A very serious famine engulfs the entire world which compels all the peoples of the world to come to Egypt to take wheat. That way they knew Joseph whom they called “Master of the Earth”. His brothers came also to take wheat thus the entire world knew that Joseph and his brothers are not Egyptians and they worship their own god.

Thus the idea of getting the entire world to know this new people is satisfied.

Since the entrance of Joseph and his brothers was during the era of the Heksos, the people of Egypt considered them as one of the symptoms of occupation, and when conditions changed and a new Pharaoh came to power he persecuted the Hebrews. The Pharaohs who enslaved the Hebrews continued for 400 years; this is to inform the entire world that this people are weak, afflicted and enslaved.

Then God appeared to Moses the prophet and reveal Himself and the deliverance from slavery to him. Moses carrying the name of God goes to Pharaoh asking him to leave his people leave Egypt because they worship another god. Here started the challenge between the god of Israel represented by Moses and the mightiest god of nations represented by the Pharaoh. That is why the Pharaoh mocked Moses and the God of his people. The insistence of the Pharaoh on the slavery of the people was a declaration of the power of the gods of the Egyptians and the weakness of the god of Israel; when the people leaves Egypt depending on the power of their god, that would have been the declaration of the defeat and weakness of the gods of the Egyptians.



The story went on with the events of the war which was not between two peoples or two armies, but between the God of Israel and the gods of the Egyptians in ten battles. In each one of these battles God declared the weakness and affliction of the Egyptian gods in front of the people. He also revealed his power over all the divinely symptoms which the Egyptians used to worship, hoping that they might believe and correct their thoughts. God declared his power on the sun, the Nile and on all other aspects of nature. Finally He declared his power on life when He struck all the first born; even the magicians of Pharaoh who had the mighty power of the Egyptian gods, said to Pharaoh in front of the people:

**“This is the finger of God.”
(Exodus 8:19)**

The call that Moses the prophet conveyed each time to the Pharaoh was:

**“Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”
(Exodus 8:1)**

The aim of that was clearly announced when Moses the prophet said to Pharaoh:

**“...that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our
God” (Exodus 8:10)**

After the strike of the first born, Pharaoh submitted to the power of the God of Israel because he knew that this god had the power over life and death and agreed to let the people go.

However when he realized that the entire world would know about the defeat of the gods of the Egyptians in the confrontation with the god of Israel, he moved his army following the Israelites in an attempt to stop them. He was trying to keep the status of the Pharaohs from collapse in the eyes of the entire world. God

defeated them and divided the Red sea and allowed his people to cross while singing praise and rejoicing whereas the Egyptians, the strongest people in the world at that time, were crushed and in horror. In Exodus 15 we can listen to Moses and the entire people singing the praise while they were leaving Egypt:

**“The LORD is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will exalt Him. The LORD is a man of war; The LORD is His name.... “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods?”
(Exodus 15: 2, 3, 11)**

This took place in order that the entire world should know that the god of Israel is the greatest among all other gods, believe in him and know him; this is what God said to Moses the prophet while they were leaving:

**“And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honour over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen”
(Exodus 14:17)**

The people left Egypt after God revealed himself and his power in front of the Egyptians, but the important question remains:

Where should this people live amidst other nations? And how would this people announce the existence of God over the globe?



First: where should the people live?

It was inevitable that God should locate his people in a place which matches the message that they were going to deliver, namely the declaration of the existence of God to the entire world. That is why He chose to them the land of Canaan for the following reasons:

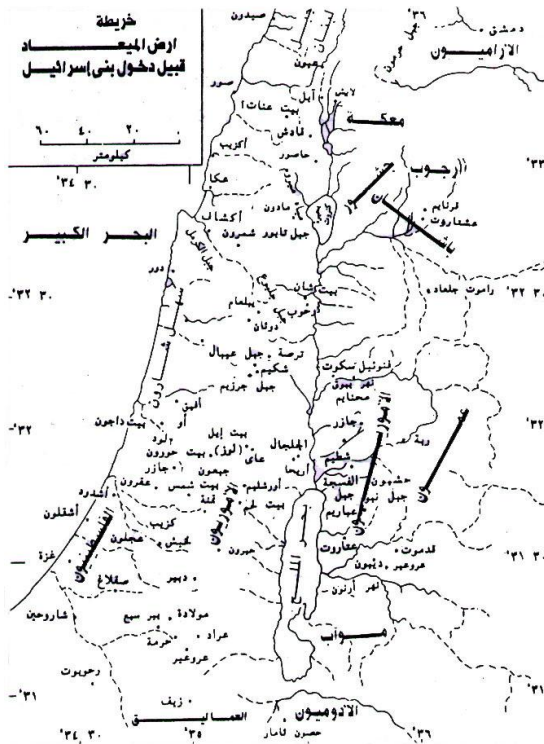
1. It was the important crossing point between east and west:

As there were no aeroplanes for travelling the only way for going from west to east or east to west was through this land, thus it became a very important commercial district. As any other commercial district, it was well known all over the world; its religious, cultural and political situations were followed by the entire world. Therefore the entire world could know the God of Israel through the continuous passage in the district or when mooring in its harbours.

2. It was an important political and military district:

All the empires that flourished had their eyes on the district to spread their control and power over it for its strategic location. It used to be considered as a safety valve to any kingdom in the east or west. Therefore any kingdom wishing to extend its control over the world should think of Canaan as one of the first districts to control. Once they succeed in that, they became the mightiest power on earth, their gods the greatest and their civilization is widely spread.

As a result of that, the eyes of the entire world were set on whoever possessed this district. It was an important district, so whoever dwelled in it should have great might to protect it from the external powers that wished to control it. God's permission to his people to dwell in this district, would serve as an announcement that they are the strongest among peoples. When the knowledge spread that they came to Canaan after the defeat of the Pharaohs and their gods, the entire world would believe that the God of Israel is the greatest.



3. It is the meeting place of civilizations:

If we consider the map of the world's civilizations, we will find that eastward there were the civilizations of the near east and the Mesopotamia (the Sumerians, the Babylonians and the Assyrians). To the north of the district was the civilization of the Hittites and to the north-west were the Greek and the Roman civilizations. To the south there were several other civilizations such as those of Moab and Ammon. This makes the district surrounded by the civilizations of the world which made it a district of thought and of exchange of culture. Each civilization had its own men of thought and discoveries who exchanged their ideas and thoughts about all issues of culture, thought and religion. This meant that there were individuals who would get acquainted with the thoughts of the people living on this land, thus the faith will spread to the entire world.

Because this land is so valuable it became the subject of competition of the entire world. All the civilizations tried to seize it and all the commercial lands tried to bring it under their control. Thus when God located his people in this land, they had no alternative but to hold to him strongly because He is their power. If they leave Him they will be powerless and could be easily attacked by any of the nations that were in wait to see this people weak to kick them out of the precious land. This way the people kept the relation to God and held firmly on holiness with Him always, thus the will of God was achieved in having his people continuously presenting their human will to live with God. Through this they could keep the possibility of salvation till the coming of Christ the Lord to him all the glory, who would present himself as a redeemer to save the entire world. Whoever reads the history of the world before the birth of Jesus can clearly see that these thoughts were actually in place.

However, there still remains a very important question:

If the goal of God was to show the entire world the god of Israel and have them believe in him, why did he prevented Israel from mixing with the neighbouring nations?

Mixing with other peoples implied the mixing with their gods also, as mixing of peoples leads to the mixing of gods also, that is why we saw that the people of Ashur worshiped the Babylonians gods, the Canaanites worshiped the gods of the Palestinians, the Hittites worshiped the gods of the Palestinians and the Romans and the Greek worshiped the gods of the Pharaohs. When the holy people mixed with other peoples they worshiped their gods also, that is why God prohibited the mixing with other peoples in order that their gods would not enter the holy land and thus the god of Israel would have become merely another god among these many gods. God must stay the only god with no other god in his kingdom.

These nations were a mixture of kinds and laws for the following reasons:

1. There were no boundaries between various lands of the world at that time and no guards to check for visa or the nationality of those crossing from one land to the other. Any one could move freely and easily from one land to the other with no barriers, and could take his gods with him.
2. Trade was among the most important aspects of the nations and when they mixed for trade purposes their gods entered with them also to the new land.

3. Any strong king who liked to introduce new crafts into his country would invite specialized craft-men from other countries; those would settle in his country to teach others the craft or the trade. With them enters the strange gods also.
4. The movement of the tribes was continuous from one land to the other; many peoples in the present time world are not living in their original homeland.
5. The capture into exile and the devastation of cities were too many in these days. History informs us that sine 1250 B.C. till 950 B.C. many changes took place in the movement and immigration of nations.

For all these reasons God prohibited his people from getting into community with these peoples to prevent their gods, their laws, their strange daily habits from affecting his people. Therefore God put in order all their daily life so that they could live by themselves with no need for the regulations of the other peoples that could be contaminated with the thoughts of the strange gods.



Second: how would this people declare the existence of God all over the globe?

After the people left Egypt it was necessary to declare the salvation with all its aspects to this people. They would be bearing the message of salvation amidst the peoples and would represent humanity in front of God during the era of shadow, symbolism and the preparation of humanity to the incarnation and salvation. For this reason the picture of the planning of salvation after exodus from Egypt until the entrance into the Promised Land concentrated on two axes:

1) The declaration of God's will for salvation through:

- a. The promise, the covenant and the law.
- b. God accompanying them and announce his tangible presence in front of them.

2) The declaration of the will of man to go along with God and live with him through his people:

- a. Affirm their faith and their acceptance of the covenant.
- b. Holding firmly to the commandments and fulfilling the daily and lively law.

The victory in wars and entering the Promised Land was the result of the meeting between the two wills of salvation, as the Promised Land symbolized the kingdom of heavens and the victory of the people in the wars symbolized the victory against the kingdom of Satan and breaking the power of evil.

☞ ***First: The declaration of God's will for salvation through his relation people***

1) The promise, the covenant and the law:

In his first meeting with God, Moses the prophet expressed the need of mankind to know Him, and knowing the path where man could meet with God. He asked him what is your name and in another meeting he requested to see his face.

In fact man in the Old Testament needed that God reveals Himself to him so that man could know God. As man was imprisoned in his material image, there was a struggle between his weak spirituality that was not mature enough yet and the materialistic condition that was controlling the minds of the mankind. For that reason, Moses second request was “show me your face”.

The dealings of God with his people in the Old Testament, the promises and the declarations were the practical answer to this need. He revealed himself and his image in as much as man could bear. God did not give Moses the Prophet, when he asked for His name, a name like that of the other gods; He declared his nature through the answer and said: ***“I AM WHO I AM.”*** The verb (to be) means that every thing is coming from him; that is why the scribes of the Old Testament used to write it as (I.H.V.H) which means ***“I exist who always exists”***.

As they knew that this name is describing the nature of God they used, when they wrote it, to wrap their hands with a special cover, say a specific prayer, use a special ink and a special pen. They did not look at the word when they wrote it as they understood that this name was a declaration from God about Himself.

When Christ the Lord, to him all the glory, came he said to them: **“I AM”** meaning “I exist”. In the book of “Revelation” St. John heard Him saying: **“who is and who was and who is to come,” (Revelation 1:8)**. In order that the declarations of God about Himself would not be mere words, they were combined with promises. Whoever entered into the community of the law would know him. Through the story of this people and living the events in which God was with them, their eyes were opened to mysterious divinely knowledge. Through the promises that were fulfilled to those individuals which represented a core part in the lives of the persons mentioned, the general promises became convincing faith and continuous trust in the promises of God to the generations. That is the work of God He gives a promise to his people and fulfils it; with that He gives general promises of salvation to mankind. The fulfilments of the promises to his people were the assurance of the general promises. When all the nations knew him, they could see that He has fulfilled his promises to his people, so they have good reason to believe his promises of salvation to them. Therefore the promises and covenants between God and his people had a great importance in the planning of salvation of the entire world.

The era of the affirmed promise to the people was a stage of selecting and sanctifying this people that will carry God’s declarations to the entire humanity. God started with the personal promises to Abraham when He said:

“Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

Before the personal promise to Abraham, there were declarations and promises to the entire humanity; all were closely related to His power on nature such as the flood and the tower of Babylon. But now the plan has moved to the level of the personal declarations, so the announcements should match the conditions and capabilities of the person or the people.

That was done as God wanted to make a new creation which could know him very well, live in a mode of holy life that was very well detailed, be on the way leading to salvation of man that could be followed by anyone who was craving for salvation and looking for the way in which to live with God. As God said to Abraham:

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.”

(Genesis 18:19)

The promise was then the specific way and life with God, which meant that this people should become a son of God. If the people freely chose to be firm in that covenant that meant they have drawn a picture of the faithful humanity that was ready for salvation.



2) Between the time-bound and eternal promises:

Since the words of God cannot be limited to a specific time, the planned promise to this people should have been an eternal one. The picture planned for the life in front of God should also be eternal with all its rituals and regulations as detailed in “Leviticus”. But how could it be eternal? While it was just a stage in which God prepared humanity and restored the possibility of man’s salvation by the announcement of a group of people which were his new people their own will to live with God.

Therefore all the promises and rituals should have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ to become eternal. Which means that all the promises, the rituals and all the regulations of life that were put in place by God to his people were merely a shadow of the reality that fell on this people from Jesus Christ who is to come at the time of salvation.

In Christ the Lord every word and each letter were fulfilled, and in him every promise and each possibility that were given in the Old Testament were satisfied. Christ was the only one who could guarantee the relation between God and man; in Him all the promises came true. Thus all the promises and commandments are eternal, even though they were given for a specific stage, because they carried the eternal shadow of Christ.



3) The levels of God's declarations about Himself

God's dealings with his people went in a marvellous escalation from the level of seeing and touching to the level of thoughts and feelings then to the spiritual level. The level of tangible and materialistic life with God was the way of religion of all the peoples, therefore it was inevitable that God starts at that level with his people to enable them to enter with the whole of their being into the relation with Him. He appeared to them in the form of a cloud and fire so that they do not draw specific features for him. The only time that He made a copper serpent for them which had the healing power, they worshiped the serpent.

It is true that the people, just as the other peoples of the world, were limited to material objects in their vision to the divine power. However the dealings of God with his people in this stage grew gradually in an attempt to cleanse them from the materialistic picture in the relation. This was achieved through the affirmation of the power of God that is unseen, as in the example of the war with Amalek and the prayer of Moses the prophet; the prayer was the non-materialistic power that brought victory to the people.

**“And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.”
(Exodus 17:11)**

There was no tangible material thing that this power and victory could be attributed.

Then they moved to the stage of sanctifying the relation with God by sanctifying the commandment itself. God wrote the covenant to them with his own finger so that the words of the covenant were actually the words of God thus the people would embrace the written word of God. The people used to see and listen to materialistic phenomena accompanying the divinely word when

received by Moses, such as the quaked mountain, the fire and the thunder sounds.

After that they moved on to the prophetic word that was fulfilled historically. He used to send them a prophecy that they live its achievement; He sent also prophecies concerning the incarnation and salvation, these would be fulfilled in some other eras. However they believed in these prophecies based on their witness to the actual fulfilment of the prophecies of their time. That was a preparation for accepting the idea of the incarnate Word of God. It was an introduction to the fact that the incarnate Word was the only picture of the relation between God and humanity.

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5)

The escalation of faith in the active word of God took place first when they saw the natural phenomena accompanying the words of God. Later they experienced the power of the word when they achieved victory in wars as long as the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the word, moved in front of them. The sanctification of the Ark was because it was a holy image and symbol for the coming down of God in front of his people. This was to bring clarification in the mind of whoever knew Him through the Old Testament that the word of God which was in the Ark would make the coming down of God manifested amidst his people. **St. Irenaeus said:** *“Through all the manifestations of God in the history of Israel, the Word of God was being accustomed to live amidst the children of man and He trained them to live with it”.*

Later on God started lifting the level of the people from limiting the existence of God in a specific place or thing, as the other nations believed, to the existence of God everywhere and that his power is controlling everything. David the prophet said:

“The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.” (Psalm 24:1)

Also:

“O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 24:1)

That was in order for the world to know through His people that He is above all man-made and tangible gods.

☞ *Second: The declaration of the will of man to go along with God through his people:*

We have so far discussed the picture of the declaration of the will of God concerning the salvation of man that matches the situation of man, his understandings and the circumstances. The work of God should definitely be counter acted by mankind in declaring his will concerning salvation. The will of man had to be declared at the level of his freedom to follow the way of God.

As mentioned earlier the people of Israel became, in front of God, as the priest of the peoples and holder of the torch. His mission was to proclaim the existence of God amidst the peoples and preserve the picture of humanity with its will for salvation so that the entire world could be saved.

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.”

(Deuteronomy 14: 2)

Israel had to present for the case of salvation, in addition to preaching God, a free will on behalf of the humanity so that the plan of salvation could be continued. The way of declaring the human will for Israel was as follows:

1) The declaration of accepting Him and accepting the covenant:

This was through patience when tested and combats in wars. Having patience when tested showed the will and reveal the strength of faith in God. Keeping firm with God reveals faith, obedience and love. Those who were freed from bondage carried on the palms of God had to declare their will. Do they want to be a people of God and His children? And carry the image of the saved humanity or not? That is why they were faced with tests of food, water then wars; to be sieved on the individual level and declare their personal will of living with God. So He said:

“...for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.”

(Deuteronomy 13: 3, 4)

The people failed in the testing that touched their needs such as food, water and wars. They even left God and worshiped the golden calf when Moses was delayed on the mountain. Therefore God refused to let those finish the way of salvation; however for

the sake of the promise and the covenant accepted God that the people continue to be His people, but not those individuals.

This spiritual principle is very important for any one who wishes to live with God. At the level of the promise of salvation, God keeps His universal promise of salvation. However at the personal level, each individual should declare his personal will to living with God to be saved. For that reason of all the people that came out of Egypt only two were able to enter the Promised Land, namely Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh.

The wars had a spiritual meaning in their relation with God which is the real combat against the kingdom of darkness. This was in addition to the realistic and historical meaning which was, as mentioned previously, to let the world know that the God of Israel is the god of heaven and earth.

2) Observance of the commandments and keeping the law:

The law was the framework through which each individual announces his personal will of living with God and getting into the shade of the expected salvation in Christ. That is why God told the people that they have life with the commandment but death without it.

And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For this commandment which

I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. (Deuteronomy 30: 8-16)

Thus observing the commandments and the law kept the covenant for the individual; it presented the image of the group salvation and showed the will of man in front of God.



The meeting of the will of God with the will of man in the people of Israel had the following two results:

A. God being with the people:

Which meant dwelling of God amidst his people and his presence as described in (Exodus 40:34)

“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

The presence of God is called in Hebrew “Shekina”, which means literally the lodging of the traveller. That was an introduction to the real salvation event which was the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory. The marvel of the revelation is manifested when we find that St. John use the same meaning in his expression:

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

St. John the Apostle uses the Greek expression for the Hebraic “Shekina” which also means “lodged in a booth or a tent”. That was what Jesus Christ to him all the glory announced to the Jews explaining that he is God who dwells amid them as he was in the temple:

**“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.”
(John 2:19 - 21)**

God's being with his people or amid them took sometimes material tangible forms, as the people were still dealing with the mind of other peoples; therefore God appeared in the form of clouds and fire. His continuous being in front of them was through the Ark of the Covenant.

B. Sanctifying the people and being atypical is a sign of salvation:

As a result of the covenant and God entering into a communion with his people, the entire people became consecrated to the Lord. In addition to keeping their sanctification they kept their victories and salvation. So said the Lord to them:

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

(Exodus 19: 4 - 6)

Worship, sacrifices and praise were the elements of sanctification of the people. Thus God had a people that adhered to Him and carried the promise of salvation not only to them but to the entire world too. Thus each promise and each work done by God to his people was done for the salvation of the entire humanity. The entire world was the goal of the plan and the picture in which God wanted to live in with the entire humanity. That was refused at the level of the general conscious, so God headed towards a special people.

☆ *The Scriptures that covers this stage:*

This stage could be seen in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy each of these scriptures presented one face of the picture of the plan as shown below:

- ❖ **Exodus:** describes the declarations of God to his people, the covenant and the failure of the people to present a true will to live with God.
- ❖ **Leviticus:** describes the law of the relation that God set for his people to live in accordance with in all their daily and seasonally issues of life; together with the issues related to sin, disobeying he law and their other life circumstances.
- ❖ **Numbers:** describes the journey, the combat and the way in order to inform about those invited to salvation and who deserved to enter the kingdom of God.
- ❖ **Deuteronomy:** describes the way of entering into obedience of God. He developed the spirituality of the people to change their picture and their perceptives from those of the world to the picture of the people of God that is prepared to enter into the Promised Land. Therefore we find that Jesus Christ to him all the glory has used many verses of this book in his ministry on earth. The spiritual language of this book is extremely spectacular as it describes the picture of the children of God who bear the symptoms of holiness on the way and consecrate their life to it.

🕯 *Prayer* 🕯

Our God
Our souls glorify you
Because you loved us to the extreme
You laboured with me, I am the ill
You came down to my ignorance
And when you found me imprisoned
And pressed in my materialistic thoughts
You sent to me the declaration of your salvation
Who am I to be of your concern?
Who am I?
To be an important subject of your thoughts
You have been busy with the commandments and the law
And unlimited love
All that to take my hand
To walk towards you to see your Messiah
To enter in the companionship of existence
And the gift of life with him
All that to lift me to your dwellings
To be always with you
In the heavenly eternal icon

Amen...

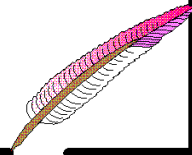


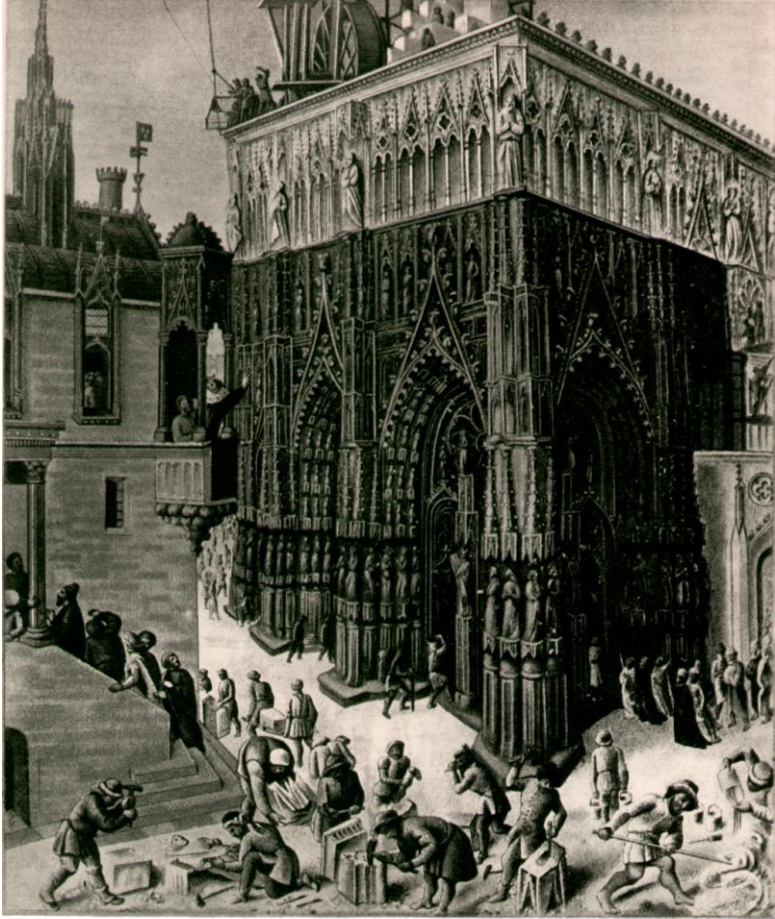
CHAPTER FIVE

THE KINGDOM IN THE MONARCHY OF ISRAEL

The fourth stage: From the Promised Land to the Captivity

- ☆ The Divine Planning and the Story of the People in this Stage.
 - ❖ First: the period of the Judges.
 - ❖ Second: from Samuel to Solomon the wise man.
 - ❖ Third: From Rehoboam to the captivity.
 - ❖ The characteristics of the lines of darkness in this stage.
 - ❖ The symbolic kingdom.
 - ❖ Prophecy in the planning of this stage.
- ☆ The scriptures of the Bible that cover this period.





THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON. Miniature by Fouquet, about 1475. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

The fourth stage

From the Promised Land to the Captivity

Major part of the history of the Old Testament lies in this stage; most of the historical, prophetic and wisdom scriptures cover this stage. In the previous stage the people that is going to carry the message of salvation to the world was formed. God revealed to them the picture of life in that stage and its symbolic bases and the world began to know the God of Israel as the mightiest and the greatest god.

Since believing in the great god is declared through fear of defeat in wars, the peoples who believed in the power of the god of Israel permitted the people to pass over their land, while those peoples that continued to see that their own gods were stronger fought the people of Israel. The Amorites and the Palestinians are examples of such peoples, in addition to some minor peoples like Bashan.

The books of Numbers and Joshua describe these wars in which the world heard about the god of Israel and knew about his power in these wars. As mentioned earlier, the wars were not the goal in themselves, but they were the means by which the world believes that the god of this people is true and strong. In addition to another kind of wars with some peoples that God instructed his people to obliterate completely. These peoples used to worship the devils openly, as worshiping evil was widely spread in the region. Therefore god gave the commandment that the magicians and devil worshipers should not be allowed to live, as the kingdom of Satan was spreading through them.

Thus the people passed through the lands of other peoples. The peoples who permitted the people to pass have already believed in the god of Israel. Those who fought the people were defeated, thus the weakness of their gods was obvious. Therefore God said to Joshua:

“...that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.” (Joshua 4: 24)

☆ *The Divine Planning and the Story of the People in this Stage:*

The plan for this stage was to allow the people to live in the Promised Land, and through that get in touch with other peoples and the world know that the god of Israel is the mightiest among the gods and fear him. They would find that he was the richest god and thus would try to come closer to him, and they would discover that he was the wisest and they would ask for his words. After a while the world would abandon their gods and fix their eyes on the god of Israel and hear his words of wisdom which are told by his men, thus they would know the truth and salvation; they would come and learn the way of the Lord.

That is what God told Micah the prophet about his intentions which were not fulfilled by the people, so He said to him:

**“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD’s house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say,
“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways,**

**And we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”
(Micah 4: 1, 2)**

The aim of God from of his people was that they proclaim God amidst all the peoples, thus the world would know and come to worship him and believe in the salvation that is coming through the people. Therefore He said through Zephaniah the prophet:

“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, That they all may call on the name of the LORD, To serve Him with one accord.” (Zephaniah 3:9)

The people followed God in victories while they were heading towards the Promised Land. The news spread out all over the world about this people which gains victories with the power of their mighty god. Even when Joshua sent two men to spy the land secretly and they met with Rahab the prostitute she said to them:

**“I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. ¹⁰ For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. ¹¹ And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”
(Joshua 2: 9 -11)**

The words of this woman reflect the condition of the people that have heard about the god of Israel. Fear of the power of the god of Israel led them to admit that he is god in heaven and on earth. Thus the goal of the divine plan was achieved at the level of the surrounding peoples.

The people actually entered the Promised Land and Joshua divided it to the tribes. It was expected that the people would grow in their relation with God and declare their fast holding to their mighty god whom they have tested. He would give them richness and wisdom so that the other peoples come and worship Him and be nearer to Him because they have seen the richness given to his people; as He said to them:

“And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day. And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand,” (Deuteronomy 30: 8, 9)

What happened was completely the opposite; the people after reaching the Promised Land did not fulfil what they promised God to do and did not follow the plan of salvation. They abandoned God and followed the example of the other peoples. The plan of salvation started dealing with a hard hearted people that refuse to go with God. What could be done and this people already have the promises and covenants from God that must be satisfied? Thus a new story began, namely taming the people to become fit for the work of the message which they should have carried. This period could be divided into three stages according to the picture of the people:

- **First:** starts from entering the Promised Land to Samuel the prophet; it is the stage of the Judges.
- **Second:** from Samuel the prophet to Solomon the wise man; this is the stage of living with God and the fulfilment of the plan for this stage.
- **Third:** from Rehoboam to the captivity; this is a stage of uncertainty in the relation with God.

❖ **First: the period of the Judges:**

This was the worst period in the life of the people with God. As soon as they got into Canaan, each one got involved in his way and all the people forgot the message of salvation and life with God thus they lost the holy life. They moved towards the gods of the neighbouring nations and tribes because their worship was erotic. Therefore God left them to be enslaved by these nations and they were subject to attacks, killing and obliteration. This took place because God cannot protect them and give them victory while they are worshipping other gods. Because in this case the glory would be given to the false gods that they worshiped and the world would stop considering the god of Israel as the greatest of the gods. It was necessary that all the peoples would look at Israel to see that when they abandon their god they go astray and become powerless. God warned them from treason and its consequences when He said to them:

“Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, so you shall

perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.” (Deuteronomy 8:19 - 20)

The scenario was the same, the people would swerve and leave God so a neighbouring people would attack them and enslave them; they would cry out to God and remember his promises and repent; He sustained them and they came out victoriously and expelled the strange people out of their land, thus they had a period of respite in their relation to God. The cycle was repeated again, they would abandon God anew and worship other gods that satisfied their lust, so God left them to be enslaved by another people. After some years a leader would appear who could gather the people and they would repent, cry to God, get to work, fight back, and win the battle and respite for another period. However they would return to the way of stray again. They repeated that seven times: leaving God, getting enslaved, repented, came back to God and dishonoured the covenant given to them from God to proclaim it amidst the other peoples. Thus we could see that the people turned rapidly from worshiping God to worshiping Baal after the death of Joshua:

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.” (Judges 2: 11 - 14)

The situation continued like that; the people knew God only in wars and crises. Their repentance was temporary and petty, as the spiritual life was very weak and their knowledge of God very thin. Therefore we would see that some of the persons of the book of Judges knew God so faintly but nevertheless when they fled to God for refuge, He worked in them.

God could find only very few individuals to work with amidst the peoples such as: Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon and Samson. Even some of these individuals used to lead the people to go back to God during the time of war, but as mentioned earlier, they did not have enough spiritual strength to lead the people towards a stable life with God. The Bible describes the situation at that time as follows:

**“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”
(Judges 21:25)**

Amidst the departing from God and the dark events, the Bible presents the stories of individuals who held firmly to life with God; they even carried personally the message of proclaiming the God of Israel to the foreign people that invaded the land. Therefore the revelation presented to us in the book of Ruth an example of such individuals. The book tells the story of a Moabites woman who united with the people of God and became a part in the chain of the plan of salvation.



❖ **Second: from Samuel to Solomon the wise man:**

The symbols of the covenant with God were still there, but useless and the spiritual life was lost. This situation continued for a period exceeding 250 years in which the people forgot the entire spiritual issues as a result of the general cooling down. Then appeared Samuel the prophet, a man strong in spirit and knew God on a personal level. God found in him the possibility of salvation work, so He worked in him to cleanse and organize the monarchy, to teach the people the spiritual life that could mend their relation with God. Samuel was a judge and a prophet; therefore he was capable of leading the people to know God. The people were in need of a clear voice from God conveyed by a man, as they were far away from God. That was the message of the prophets of the Old Testament; to present the word of God to the people. Samuel worked hard and drew a clear picture of the relation with God, however the people were short sighted and they requested Samuel the prophet to become their king to simulate the other peoples. They were not aware of the fact that they are a people whose king is God himself, and that was the secret of their power and their uniqueness amidst the world.

With their spiritual weakness, they concluded that their powerless could be attributed to the fact that they had no king; they did not look carefully to discover that the actual reason of their weakness was their abandonment of God. Their request portrayed the weakness of their faith and the failure to see the plan of salvation and the meaning of their mission. This people left Egypt with the full understanding that God was their king and that they were his people; therefore God was in full control of all their social and political issues. Their mission was to proclaim God the king amidst the peoples of the world; however they could not grasp this

idea as it requires a spiritual and faith vision. They were bound in what they could see and touch only; therefore they requested an earthly king. Thus God said to Samuel the prophet when he was sad for this request:

“And the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. ⁸ According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. ⁹ Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behaviour of the king who will reign over them.”

(1 Samuel 8: 7 - 9)

This meant that they practically rejected the reigning of God over them since they were brought up out of the land of Egypt; therefore God said to Samuel to listen to their request and install a king for them, so they chose Saul to reign as their king. However Saul was from the generation that did not know God as true life and adoration; and he nearly changed the monarchy to become like one of those of the other nations that are far away from God. Therefore God intervened and asked Samuel to anoint David as the king of Israel, to lead the people in the way of life with God and satisfy the plan of salvation designed for this stage which were:



1. The announcement amidst the nations of the power of the God of Israel, his richness and his wisdom:

David and Saul went through many wars as detailed in (1st Samuel) which ended with the death of Saul in his war with the Palestinians. After that God blessed David and he became the king of the twelve tribes, i.e. a king reigning over Judah and Israel. As was agreeable to God, He completed in him the plan of salvation of this stage.

As for the proclamation of God amidst the peoples, Israel had the power and control over the entire region. David has conquered the Hittites, the Assyrians and the Egyptians which were the strongest nations of the entire world. Thus the god of Israel became the fearsome and mighty god; therefore the entire nations of that time submitted to him, as detailed in 1st Chronicles:

“So David did as God commanded him, and they drove back the army of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer. Then the fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.”

(1st Chronicles 14: 16 - 17)

We would emphasize here that the idea of wars was the only way by which the world could understand the might of God. Some might question how the great and merciful God could declare himself in this manner. We would like to clarify that life on earth is just the beginning of existence and not the entire existence. Man is born on earth to proclaim and chose the eternal existence which could not be separate from God. In case man chooses to exist away from God that could only mean that he has selected to die and vanish on earth. That is a free choice which means that he has selected the fleshly materialistic life, which ends with the end of his

life on earth. This is shared by the animals that are not important, as who would consider the death of an animal an insult?!

Therefore God planned salvation to the entire world that could be fulfilled through faith in God and salvation which God prepared for the entire world in Jesus Christ. As mentioned earlier the war fields were the only available place where gods could be proclaimed for the nations to believe in them, it was inevitable that God reveal himself in this arena. Thus the proclamation of faith in God was linked to wars; the peoples heard about God and his people and they glorified and exalted him. This became an indirect believig in him, and those who did that should not perish.

That is what we saw in the story of Rahab the prostitute (Joshua 2) who was a non-Jewish woman, but when she declared her faith she became not only among the saved but even Christ the Lord to whom all the glory was born from her offspring. This was mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ:

“Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse” (Matthew 1: 5)

As for the peoples that refused to accept that the god of Israel is the god of heavens and earth and would like to exalt their own gods, they went into war with the people of God to show the power of their gods; these peoples would:

- **First:** hinder the proclamation of God amidst the world and the universal planning of salvation for the entire humanity.
- **Second:** by refusing the faith in God they had refused the eternal life, so death was their inevitable end.

In addition to that there were some peoples that spread the worship of devils and their way of worship was to sin. These peoples that God wanted them to be obliterated were dead already as they have given themselves to the devil; therefore their obliteration was a rescue to the other peoples which could have been controlled by the power of the devil.

2. During David's era, God became the foremost in the monarchy:

The covenant restored its power, and the tunes of praising God went up to announce the personal will of the entire people of God. Samuel the prophet and David the prophet organized the manner of worship and the people worshiped as a group according to these rituals. David the prophet was organizing the Jewish life in accordance with the law so that the people lived the most splendid period of their life. The world heard about the God of Israel who was worshiped by his people in love and godliness; the daily sacrifices were organized together with the feasts and seasons. The people, the king, the priests and the Leviticus used to gather daily in front of God. Every one knew God and believed in him.



First Chronicles tells in Chapter 16 about the wonderful picture of the king, the priests, the Leviticus and the people surrounding the Ark of the Covenant and they were praising in front of the Ark. In accordance with law they gave the esteem to the glory of God amidst them. David the prophet's commandment to his son Solomon was to hold firmly to the law so that God will fulfil in him the planning of salvation when He said:

“Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: “I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; that the LORD may fulfil His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,’ He said, ‘you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.”

(1st Kings 2:1 - 4)

3. The definite subsistence of God amidst his people in the temple as a symbol of the steadfastness of the Kingdom of God:

David the prophet has located the place of God's subsistence amidst his people by preparing the temple of God where the people should meet for worship; this will be a definite place for the subsistence of God amidst the entire world. However God did not allow David to build the temple because he had shed a lot of blood that was not according to God's will. Therefore God entrusted the temple building to Solomon, David's son. Thus another strong one

is added to the other symbols for the Lord Jesus Christ, to him all the glory and that is Jerusalem's Temple where the glory of God would come down in front of his people. The temple was the house of God and the secret of his power. The glory of the divine comes in it just as with Christ the Lord where the fullness of divinity comes into him. Thus God has been proclaimed at the time of David amidst the world through power and amidst his people in their worshipping Him.

4. God gives his people richness and wisdom:

Solomon the wise man appeared so that God would complete in him the declaration of salvation amidst the nations. In his era the entire world knew the god of Israel who gave his people and monarchy the richness; and he gave Solomon the king a wisdom that was matchless by any other wisdom in the world.

The holy Bible tells about the testimony of the kings of the earth about the wisdom and richness of Solomon the wise man. That could be clearly seen in the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon when she said to him:

“It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom.”

(1st Kings 10: 6)

In the same book of Kings we read:

“So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand

horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland. Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the current price. Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria. (1st Kings 10: 23 - 29)

The Lord Christ, to whom all the glory, mentioned this picture to declare that he was the concealed meaning of all these symbols; he was the goal of the plan and the voice of wisdom. He was the giver of richness and the power to the people. This could be read in the gospel by Luke when He said:

“The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the Wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.”

[Luke 11: 31]

You may have, dear reader, a question in your mind on whether this vision was clear to the people, the prophets and the kings in the Old Testament. To answer that let us read calmly together the following paragraph from 1st Kings, chapter 8

“then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men), that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers. “Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name’s sake (for they will hear of

Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.” (1st Kings 8: 39- 43)

You can see, dear reader how these understandings were so clear and the message visible for the leaders of the people, and if you need more evidence you can read 2nd Chronicles, chapter 6 and 7 and Psalms 16, 18, 19, 24, 47 and 48. This was how God subsisted amidst the people that worship Him, and the entire world heard about Him and knew Him as Solomon the wise man said:

“that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other. Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.” (1st Kings 8: 60, 61)

The people should have continued in this manner so that the faith would be established for all the peoples and salvation materialized. However what the people did was completely otherwise, that made God intervene in facing the will of man again to implement the planning of salvation.



❖ **Third: From Rehoboam to the captivity:**

With this we come to a descending period again and the attempt of God to salvage the planning of salvation in spite of the picture of darkness and the will of the kings and the people to get away from the picture of life with God; they were completely caught up in the political and religious groupings of the nations. Thus the kingdom that was entrusted to this people became prone to be lost if it was not for few individuals that are mentioned in the two books of Kings and the two books of Chronicles. Those individuals kept the kingdom in this period so that devotion and alliance could continue; however the majority of kings in this period rejected life with God and the people followed them. Therefore they were scattered and entered the era of captivity where a new stage of the planning of salvation began; this will be presented later.

The story began after the death of Solomon the King (931 B.C.) and his son took over a strong and well established monarchy. However there were foreign gods which Solomon the king introduced as a result of his marriage to foreign women who would not abandon their gods but worshiped these foreign gods in the monarchy.

“But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites— from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For

Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.”

(1st Kings 11: 1- 8)

Further more Rehoboam the son of Solomon was not a wise man; he did not have a strong relation with God therefore God could not employ him and give him wisdom and power to work as his father did. When his people approached him to reduce the taxes and the forced labour which was imposed by Solomon the king, he consulted the old men who agreed with the requests of the people. However when he consulted his friends they refused the requests of the people and advised him to use force with them and he did that:

“and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!” (1st Kings 12: 14)

The people answer was like this:

“Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: “What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!” So Israel departed to their tents.” (1st Kings 12: 16)

This meant that they forsook the monarchy of Judah and instated Jeroboam as their king.

Jeroboam was a fugitive from Solomon the wise man and lived in Egypt. After the death of Solomon he returned and led the people against Rehoboam who wanted to rein them by force, but God did not allow them to fight their brothers and told them:

“Thus says the LORD: “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.” Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD.” (1st Kings 12: 24)

That was to avoid loosing the heritage of David and end of the entire mission of the people so rapidly. If we look at the history of this people we would see that the monarchy of Israel (the Monarchy of the North), i.e. the ten tribes that broke up from Judah and became an independent monarchy soon turned towards the gods of the world and abandoned the worship of the Lord.

That is why God wanted to isolate Jerusalem from this effect rapidly in order to avoid the loss of what was left of the people amidst this strong surge of strange gods. Thus Rehoboam the son of Solomon became a king reigning on the southern monarchy only which is the monarchy of Judah. Since the kingdom of the north had to go down to Jerusalem to worship God in the temple in accordance with the tradition, Jeroboam prevented them and made a golden calve for them to worship and said to them:

“Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class

of people, who were not of the sons of Levi. Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.” (1st Kings 12: 28 - 33)

The effect of the pharaohs adoration on Jeroboam could clearly be seen as he lived for a long time there and this golden calve was Abis one of the gods of the Egyptians. Jeroboam expelled the Leviticus and the priests who used to dwell in the monarchy of Israel. It is so astonishing is that the people rapidly turned away from God and did not reject the strange gods. This revealed the shallow relation of the people with God and that they were ready to abandon their faith and turn to worship other gods.

God started sending prophets to them with messages to the people to return to His worship but they refused to listen to the prophets. The succession of evil kings continued; they were employed by Satan in establishing darkness amidst the people by dissemination of the strange gods. The prophets that were sent by God to save their heritage and image that was for the kingdom were met with rejection, expulsion or murder. The first book of Kings starting from chapter 13 gives details of the struggle between the word of God through his prophets and the strings of darkness that were spread by the kings, the prophets and the priests of the foreign gods. We would see among the prophets who tried to bring the people back from their stray: Jehu son of Hanani, Elijah the prophet, Elisha the prophet, Micaiah son of Imlah, Hoshea, Jonah

the prophet, Amos, Micha the Morshti). The 2nd Kings describes that as follows:

“For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger, for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, “You shall not do this thing.” Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.” Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them. So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the

fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone” (2nd Kings 17: 7 - 18)

◆ ***The end of the northern monarchy of Israel:***

The situation continued like that until God sent to them the warning message through the words of the prophet Isaiah that they would be taken into capture and nations would come and destroy them because they abandoned the worship of God. God was patient with them for a long time, however the world should know that the secret of the existence of this people on earth was their mission to proclaim God. If they abandon God, they would be defeated and broken and the entire world should see that; otherwise they would doubt the power and glory of the God of Israel. Isaiah warned them saying:

The Lord sent a word against Jacob, and it has fallen on Israel.

All the people will know—Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria— who say in pride and arrogance of heart: “The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars.” Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and spur his enemies on, The Syrians before and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with an open mouth. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still. For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore the LORD will cut off head and tail from Israel, Palm branch and bulrush in one day. The elder and honourable, he is the head; the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail. For the

leaders of this people cause them to err, and those who are led by them are destroyed. Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows; for everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still”
(Isaiah 9: 8- 17)

The kingdom of Assyria attacked them in 722 B.C. and the entire monarchy was smashed by Sargon the Assyrian and the tribe of Naphtali was taken as captives as mentioned in 2nd Kings’:

“In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria”
(2nd Kings 15: 29)

Then the tribe of Reuben, Gad and half-tribe of Manasseh:

“So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He carried the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day” (1st Chronicles 5: 26)

When Samaria fell, the Assyrians brought aliens from other countries to Samaria and all the lands of the tribes, so the land was invaded with the worship of foreign gods. Worship came into existence that tried to compromise between the God of Israel and the gods of the nations; that was the reason for the hostility of the Jews to Samaria. The land had become a new strange kingdom which was not the people of God and they were not the sons of Jacob. Thus the people that could be utilized by God to work amidst the world was the monarchy of the south only, i.e. the

monarchy of Judah which included the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin and half-tribe of Manasseh.



◆ ***The end of Judah's monarchy of the south:***

The wars of darkness started their attempts to smash what was left of the people of God. We can read in the 2nd Chronicles the complete picture of Judah's monarchy. Sometimes reigned a king who knew God so the people would follow him and abandon the foreign gods, adhere to the sacrifices and the temple and remove the idols and the altars of the foreign gods from the monarchy. Some other times took over an evil king who belonged to the foreign gods of the nations, so he abandoned the worship of God and established altars for the foreign gods. The people followed him in the worship of the foreign gods. After a while reigned one of the kings who knew God and he brought about a spiritual revolt and cleansed the temple anew and restored the relation of the people with God. However those good kings were few in comparison with the evil ones. As for the people they began to know God during the seasons and feasts as a social event only. Therefore it was easy for them to abandon Him rapidly, as God was not the god of their hearts and minds anymore. God became not more that a god to gather around and have feasts and joy with him.

So God rebuked them for these double standards in their life and warned them through the prophet Isaiah:

“Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah: “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?” Says the LORD. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. “When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil”
(Isaiah 1: 10 - 16)

However with all these warnings from God and the words of the prophets to them, they did not listen and repent, so He declared the captivity to them to make them wake up and return to Him; that is how He told them through the words of the prophet Micah:

“Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies” (Micah 4: 10)

And through the words of the prophet Jeremiah:

“And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years” (Jeremiah 25: 11)

❖ ***Rejecting Life with God and the Captivity:***

Thus we could see a slide down followed by another slide down, and extreme austerity of the kings, the leaders and the people; the people became complete strangers to God. The planning of salvation stopped because God had no place amidst his people, not under the kingdom that carried His name and inhabited his house.

The scatter of the people and the loss of their identity as the people of God became a necessity in order to maintain the image of God amidst the peoples. This meant that it was inevitable that God should allow the Exile of the people so that the world could see that when the people deserted God they lost his power that took them out of Egypt with the strength of His arm. When they abandoned God they lost the wisdom and richness and became slaves, the end was very sad.

This took place in three stages, hoping that the people would return, seek God again and repent in any one of the three stages. However the hearts were cast of stone, the will was lacking and they insisted on their evil.

In 608 B.C. during the era of Jeremiah the prophet, Zephaniah the prophet and Huldah the prophetess it came to pass that after Josiah the king Jehoahaz took over the monarchy and he was an evil king who did not know God. The Pharaoh Neco of Egypt wanted to extend his reign over the entire region, so he invaded the kingdom and ousted Jehoahaz and enthroned his brother Eliakim

instead of him and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Changing the names of the local kings was a well practiced habit of invaders to denote the change of their identity. The new name given by the Pharaoh signifies the subordination of the king of Jerusalem to him. The Pharaoh Neco imposed high taxes on the people; Ezekiel the prophet was contemporaneous to these events and he prophesized about them:

“Moreover take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, and say: ‘What is your mother? A lioness: She lay down among the lions; among the young lions she nourished her cubs. She brought up one of her cubs, and he became a young lion; He learned to catch prey, And he devoured men. The nations also heard of him; He was trapped in their pit, and they brought him with chains to the land of Egypt”
(Ezekiel 19: 1- 4)

During this period the supremacy on the region changed and Babylon became the sovereign of the world

In 601 B.C. Egypt conquered the Chaldeans that made Jehoiakim think of seeking the help of Egypt against Nebuchadnezzar during the era of Psamtik the second the pharaoh of Egypt. This action excited Nebuchadnezzar so he came to Jerusalem, captured Jehoiakim, tied him in chains and took some of the costly articles of the altar and some of the people back to Babylon as captives. The book of Chronicles describes that saying:

“Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.
(2nd Chronicles 36: 8)

The text mentions a strange phrase *“what was found against him”* that phrase describes a blot that was found on his body as a tattoo with the name of Satan; this shows that he had a pact with Satan. These rituals were and still are very common with some peoples till now. Jehoiakim died in Babylon and his son Jehoiakin reigned after him; he was evil just like his father. Jeremiah the prophet prophesized about him saying:

““As I live,” says the LORD, “though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off” (Jeremiah 22: 24)

Nebuchadnezzar wanted to impose his authority over him when he heard that he desired to become independent of Babylon. He came over to him tied him in chains, plundered Jerusalem and the temple and took some of the people as captives back to Babylon in 598 B.C. This is the second capture. Nebuchadnezzar entrusted the monarchy to Mattaniah who was Jehoiakin’s uncle and changed his name to Zedekiah. He was worse in evil than his two predecessors, so he did not listen to Jeremiah the prophet and God’s warnings to him. A council was arranged in Jerusalem which was attended by the Phoenicians, the Syrians and Psamtik from Egypt. The council was aiming at the establishment of a pact against Babylon, and they did start a riot against Babylon. So Nebuchadnezzar came again and sieged Jerusalem for two years. He took over Sidon to control the Phoenicians, entered Jerusalem, captured Zedekiah, obliged him to witness the murder of his son, scooped out his eyes and took him as captive. He took with him most of the people from Jerusalem to Babylon in 588 B.C. after demolishing Jerusalem and the temple and taking what was left in the temple with him back to Babylon.

◇ ***The end of the fine picture:***

Thus the fine picture in which the people could have lived on earth ended as a result of transcending and the destroying of the symbols of salvation. The king, the priest and the people abandoned the worship of God; when He sent to them Jeremiah the prophet, Zephaniah, Habakkuk and Ezekiel they did not listen to them but the king became arrogant, the priest became unclean and the people strayed; all of them left God.

The people were no more the people of God; the temple became mere cold walls that did not enclose a relation with God; the tunes of praise could not be heard anymore and the warmth of the sacrifices that declare the covenant with God could not be felt anymore. However even with this dark picture, God found some individuals who were capable of carrying the torches of light amidst the darkness in the exile so that the people could return again in accordance with prophesies and the covenants in order that the salvation of the entire world could be fulfilled. Those individuals were people such as Ezekiel the prophet, Daniel the prophet, and the three young men.

Thus the planning went into a new stage for the fulfilment of salvation which was the dealing with the people while they were in exile. This depressing picture was inevitable as a result of the incursion of the lines of darkness and the reign of the kingdom of evil, all as a result of the evil will of man.

❖ **The characteristics of the lines of darkness in this stage:**

- 1. Worshiping foreign gods:** these gods came into existence authoritatively through the connection of the kings to these gods. Thus the kingdom of darkness reigned over the picture of the kingdom of God and His people on earth using evil kings as symbols of the authority of darkness.
- 2. Marrying foreign women:** through these marriages strange adorations entered the Jewish families that contaminated the relation with God. That was how the foreign gods entered into the personal life of the people of God.
- 3. Concentrating on land and politics as a kingdom amidst the world:** the kings lost the feeling that they are a special kingdom for God. They became just like other kings who seek their authority through the earthly powers and political pacts, being protected by great nations not by God. Thus the vision of the people to their mission changed and their image amidst the world also changed. They became no more than a people among other peoples neither protected by God nor did they seek his existence among them. Therefore there was no alternative for this people but to be destroyed or otherwise renewed somehow.
- 4. Loss of their correlation with God:** that made the people look for earthly lust and life only even it was with Satan. The spiritual and psychological correlation of the people with the idols and Satan was for their lust. With this Satan could reign over the kingdom of God in the following three forms:

- **Authoritatively:** through the kings.
- **Familial:** through marriage with foreign women and permitting foreign gods to become part of the daily life.
- **Personally:** through the association with lust that was considered the adoration mode for Satan.

In this stage we could see the meaning of the loss of the symbols of salvation that used to give the divine power to the people namely: the Temple, the Kingdom, the Land; the Word of God and the correlation with it.

The kingdom was the meaning which the people should have fully comprehended to declare it in front of the entire world. Therefore God provided all the ways and means that could make his people emerge in the likeness of this kingdom. He lifted them from the level of slavery to the level of freedom, up to the level of visible and audible declaration and even to the level of talking to them personally and dwelling among them. He made a strong monarchy for them and an important entity amidst the peoples. He made them the focus of attention of the world; that would have led the world to knowing the way of salvation through them.

However with all that planning, the people were moving in an unstable way with God. The works of God for the plan of salvation were not always met with the will of the people to live with God. As we have seen they completely abandoned God at the end of this stage which necessitated the decisive intervention of God to save the general salvation of the entire world.

God used several means and tools in this stage to declare himself and prepare the world for his coming and the salvation; these tools were:

❖ **The symbolic kingdom:**

The meaning of the kingdom is that God should reign on life, or in other words that man should enter into the scope of the kingdom of God from which he was expelled because of sin. As this kingdom could not really materialize without the end of the death judgment and the renewal of the human nature, which could only happen through Christ the Lord to him all the glory. The kingdom, in which the Old Testament could live, i.e. before the Lord Christ to him all the glory, was the symbolic kingdom. The issues had the shadow of life and took its power from the resemblance with the truth that was coming in Christ the Lord.

Thus the symbolic kingdom was a temporary state and picture in which God met man. Since it was impossible for man to see God after sin, it was inevitable that the presence of God be symbolic. This presence was through forms which the people could understand them to mean the presence of God, even though they were in forms that were deprived of the nature of God. The forms were of the elements of nature but they indicated the existence of God and his presence in person; they began to develop in accordance with the conditions of the people, their attitude and the stages of their firmness.

❖ ***The elements of the symbolic kingdom:***

God began revealing himself to Moses through the burning bush then He was in front of them as the column of fire. He provided them with manna from the sky and followed that with water coming out of the rock which symbolises Jesus Christ to him all the glory. Then He was with them wherever they moved accompanying them from the ark and met with them in the tabernacle. Then after entering and settling in the Promised Land, He had his permanent

subsistence in the temple; He dwelled in the Holy of the Holies through the ark. The people approached him with sacrifices and praises to meet with him daily and on feast days.

Thus God was residing amidst his people which are the meaning of (Shakina) i.e. the coming down of God in his glory. That was a symbol of the coming down of God amidst the entire world in the divine nature. As was mentioned earlier, this picture gave the feeling of the existence of God and the holiness of the places where God used to meet with his people. However neither the fire was his nature or the timber of the tabernacle or the substance of the cloud in which He appeared and talked to them through it. His existence in this way was merely to prepare the minds of the people and the entire world for the possibility of God's coming upon the manhood nature for the salvation; to meet with man in the person of Jesus Christ to him all the glory. That what St. John pointed out in the speech of Jesus Christ to him all the glory with the Jews:

**“So the Jews answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking of the temple of His body”
(John 2: 18 - 21)**

This means that Jesus Christ to him all the glory was referring to his incarnation as the union between the Divinity and the manhood, and that was Emanuel (which means God who has come amidst us, according to the accurate translation). This is the picture of the temple in which God came upon to meet with the people.

That is why the temple became the centre of the symbolic kingdom of the Old Testament and Jerusalem became the place of God's coming upon. The dwelling of people in the land of Canaan was a symbol of the dwelling of humanity in the kingdom of God.

Therefore the Promised Land became the land in which God dwelled with his people, in order for the symbolic kingdom to become a live situation of the truth inherited in the symbol. The Promised Land in which God dwelled with his people in the Old Testament became the Church of the New Testament and it will be heavens in the eternal life. That was the picture of God in the symbolic kingdom.

◆ ***Man in the symbolic kingdom:***

Let us consider the picture of man in this situation, and as it was mentioned previously the people represented mankind in the plan of salvation. When the people were not ready for this situation, God chose Moses the prophet to talk to him and establish with him the covenant in the form of the old kingdom on behalf of the entire people. Thus Moses became the mediator of the Old Testament. When Moses died, Joshua became the one dealing with God as the mediator between the people and God. After that the people went astray, God dealt with the heroes of the book of Judges as representatives of the people in front of him. Later on with the corruption of the picture and the weakness of the priests and the people, God started dealing with individuals with whom He talked on a personal level to send them to the people to convey the message God wanted to give to the people. These individuals, called Prophets (this will be discussed in details in the next paragraph) such as Samuel the prophet who was a prophet and a judge for the people, i.e. a spiritual and civil leader at the same

time. However the people refused to stay without a king, as they did not have the comprehension and the spiritual vision that would enable them to understand the meaning of the kingdom, where God was the king. They were looking for someone to represent the people which was the king they wanted, as they were still confined in the materialistic picture. This led them to deviation and abandoning God. With this the people added the person of the king to the symbolic meanings pertaining to the kingdom; as God was the King according to the plan of salvation. However the people wanted a human king so this king had a symbolic picture in the Old Testament. That is why God rejected Saul, as he was not in a position to give the symbol its meaning, and chose David who completed this picture. Then God gave the mission of the symbolic work in the kingdom to Solomon his son saying:

“Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfil the statutes and judgments with which the LORD charged Moses concerning Israel. Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed” (1st Chronicles 22:13)

God promised David that the kingdom will be firmly established for ever, and David the prophet delivered this promise to his son also:

**“And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever”
(1st Chronicles 17:14)**

The firm establishment of the kingdom will not be on earth, as this earth is not eternal. God meant with this throne something else, which was not terrestrial but it was the real heavenly kingdom which could only be in Christ the Lord. However He talked about it at that time as the king symbolised the picture of the kingdom in the Old Testament.

The picture of the kingdom at this level was revealed by God to all the prophets as clarified by the following prophesy:

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9: 6- 7)

Daniel prophesised also:

““I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 71: 13-14)

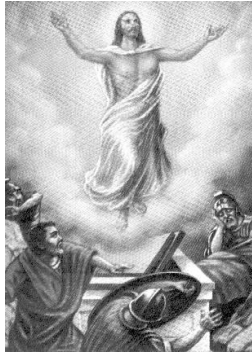
Also Zechariah the prophet said:

“And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be— “The LORD is one,” And His name one” (Zechariah 14: 9)

And finally Malachi said:

“For I am a great King,” Says the LORD of hosts, “And My name is to be feared among the nations” (Malachi 1:14)

From these prophecies we can understand the idea of the kingdom in the Old Testament which was symbolised by the throne of David from which Jesus Christ came to fulfil the picture of the real Kingdom, where Jesus is the King on the hearts in his Church and sitting on the eternal throne with his Divine power making his eternal Kingdom.



❖ **Prophecy in the planning of this stage:**

Prophecies were not merely informing about matters that were going to take place, but they were the words of God that cultivate the human mind to know Him and show His intentions. Prophecy was a message from God through which He declares the planning of his wisdom to keep the faith of the people so that they would wait and hold firmly to the fulfilment of these matters. Or even live in the shadow of the true event taking place in the future in accordance with prophecy at the time in which they lived.

The thought of salvation through the Messiah was declared in prophecies, so they became symbolic events in the Jewish rituals, in the thoughts of the wise men of Israel, in the prayers of each Jew and even the origin of hope in the forthcoming life. The vision that

all the prophets wrote about was to know God and to attempt to stir the will of man to receive the salvation that was offered by God. As a salvation atmosphere in the late eras, prophecies were centred on the saviour in person and image. That was either declared clearly or given symbolically. The clear declaration was about the person Jesus Christ, his features and his work. The symbolic declaration was through the fulfilment of the salvation of the people on a historic level. Thus they would have confidence in the possibility of salvation through their faith. Therefore prophecies were tools to provide the following:

1. The declaration of the image of God and his nature as there was complete ignorance about his blessed person.
2. Instructions for life with God and how to live with Him.
3. How should man live on earth in anticipation of salvation.
4. The coming of Jesus Christ and the salvation of humanity through Him.

◆ ***Prophecies had two images:***

1. **A tangible and visible image:** such as the burning bush that Moses the prophet saw which referred to and prophesied about the incarnation. Examples of such prophecies are many such Jeremiah's prophecies and Ezekiel the prophet who was once shown the bones of some dead persons to whom God gave life and He informed him about how the people should return after passing the stage of weakness and death. (Ezekiel 37).

2. The image of the audible word: this is the more common pattern of prophecies; the instructions of God were different depending on the stage:

- ***In the first and second stages:*** where salvation was for the entire world, the concentration was on general signs and prophecies which were not specific. It was a declaration of the general salvation as mentioned in Genesis:

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15)

The story of the Deluge refers to that also.

- ***In the third stage:*** when God had his exclusive people and He started declaring His will to them, prophecies were at the level of revealing the salvation, the way of life under the shadow of salvation and redemption. The Law and the Jewish rituals carried the character of prophesy about the redeemer and saviour and the end of the authority of death.
- ***In the fourth stage:*** where hesitation, schism and evil were predominant, prophecies concentrated on the call for Israel to return to God and repent. Also on scolding the people for leaving life with God and what will happen to them if they abandon God and insist on revolt. The announcement of salvation was in parallel with the announcement of the state of slavery in which the people would end. With each prophesy about slavery of the people, the promise of salvation through the Saviour was strengthened. That was to give whoever held firmly to that promise amidst the darkness the possibility of salvation.

- ***In the fifth stage:*** here come prophesies of awaiting the Saviour and stability on the way so that when He comes the people would be ready and longing for Him.

With each transcending and each loss of the image of the people of God, He sent a promise of salvation to his people and to the entire world. That was to make the people understand their historical role in salvation. He was always reminding them that they should carry the salvation to the entire world. The world and the entire humanity were the focus of the thoughts of God as it is very clearly seen from the following verses:

“Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem”
(Isaiah 2: 2 - 3)

He even told them that He would build an altar in other places than Jerusalem:

“In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border”
(Isaiah 19:19)

And specified their mission through which the entire world should know the salvation as He said to them:

“Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the

earth.” Thus says the LORD, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, To Him whom man despises, To Him whom the nation abhors, To the Servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, Because of the LORD who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; And He has chosen You”
(Isaiah 49: 6 - 7)

He also declared to them that He was going to approximate to Himself and accept whoever might come to Him and worship Him:

“Thus says the LORD: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.” Do not let the son of the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD Speak, saying, “The LORD has utterly separated me from His people”; nor let the eunuch say, “Here I am, a dry tree.” For thus says the LORD: “To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, Even to them I will give in My house and within My walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. “Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, And holds fast My covenant—Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations”
(Isaiah 56: 1 - 7)

Thus we can see, dear reader that the image of general salvation was proclaimed very clearly in prophecies during the time of Elijah i.e. in 740 B.C. This period was among the periods in which the Northern Kingdom of Israel reached to the level of nullity in their life with God. Therefore God sent these revelations and prophecies so that the few who remained waiting the salvation would hold firmly to them and every one knew that God would save the entire world and not only Israel. Isaiah even said to Him:

**“Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence—“
(Isaiah 64: 1)**

Prophecies continued later for the rest of the people and the tribes of the Kingdom of Judea till the time of captivity. During and after the time of captivity there were only few prophecies in order that the people would keep themselves until the coming of the Saviour.



☆ *The scriptures of the Bible that cover this period:*

As mentioned earlier, most of the scriptures of the Old Testament cover this stage of the planning of salvation. There were a lot of spiritual and historical developments for which God found it necessary to send many prophets and give the people the promises that would support them on the way of salvation. Here is the plan that was proclaimed in the scriptures according to the holy revelation:

❖ **The book of Judges:**

The stage started with the entrance to the Promised Land, as presented in the book of Joshua. Then the book of Judges that told about the departure of the people from the image of the plan of salvation. However God was still keeping for his people the way and salvation so He sent the leaders who could lead the people to deliverance. The book of Judges proceeded in the logical and not the historical pattern; concentrating on revealing three main thoughts namely:

1. Commitment to God.
2. Abandoning God.
3. The results of this abandoning.

We could read about the first God's priest who worshiped the idols; he was the grand son of Moses the prophet. The story is found in Chapter 17:7-13

❖ **Ruth:**

The holy revelation in this book presents the story of the existence of God in the hearts of his children in spite of the apostasy that spread at that time. The persons involved in the

events of this book were not Jews by birth or the offspring of the tribes. This was to clarify that the intention behind the people of God was to describe whoever believed in Him and lived with Him. God could even choose from the midst of apostasy the individuals who gave witness for Him and completed the planning of salvation. Therefore God selected Ruth to be one of the links in the chain of holy genealogy of Christ the Lord to him all the glory. This was also a salvation sign to the nations.

This book used to be read by the Jews in the ritual adoration of the feast of the Pentecost which had an important meaning for the Jews as they celebrate the receipt of the Law by Moses from God.

❖ **The two books of Samuel:**

When the people apostatised, God looked for individuals who could carry the will of salvation and life with Him so that the image of salvation could be completed. The revelation concentrated in these two books on two persons namely: Samuel the prophet and David the prophet.

❖ **The two books of Kings:**

In these two books, the holy revelation presents the general picture of the Kingdom and how the historical story proceeded. The work of God was through the prophets that He sent to the people to bring them back to life with Him. This kingdom was not like other peoples but they were carrying the voice of God and the plan of general salvation of the entire humanity; therefore their history was important for the vision of salvation and knowing the work of God.

❖ **The two books of Chronicles:**

These two books present the priesthood picture in the planning of salvation through the relation of the people and the kingdom with the temple which became the symbol of the presence of God amidst his people. Their concern for the temple reflected their concern for God, and their neglect of the temple reflected their refusal of life with God which led to the tragic end that was the demolition of the temple and the captivity of the people.

❖ **Tobias:**

This book tells about the image of the people of God through individuals when the people failed in general. The book tells the story of a family that was taken to Nineveh with Israel when they were taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. In spite of the environment surrounding them and the difficult trials in the banishment and captivity, this family kept the holiness of the covenant with God, and God was with them in their life. This individual picture was revealed by God to tell us about the corruption of the kingdom and that He was obliged to complete the design of salvation far away from the kingdom.

❖ **The Wisdom scriptures:**

Most of these books were written during the periods of strong spiritual life as they show the feelings of man towards God. The purpose of writing them was to show man as an individual worshiping and praising God. They expose the depths of humanity and their feelings in facing the declarations of God and their love to Him through presenting the adoration of the mind and emotions. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God gave man the ability to speak up in a way that brought him into community of love. On

many occasions He might reveal to him some of the divine secrets also.

❖ **The book of Psalms:**

These are the pulses of man's love to God in all the encounters of life that prescribe the relation with Him. They are presented in Praise, Thanks giving, Penitence, Help, Love as well as some of the specific prophesies that are declared by God through the writer.

❖ **The book of Proverbs:**

This is the wisdom of righteousness and of being assigned to God in all the encounters of life.

❖ **The book of Wisdom:**

The book shows the absolute need of man and his fullness in God, and discovering the true meaning of life.

❖ **The book of Ecclesiastes:**

Confirms that God is life and anything else is meaningless and useless.

❖ **The book of Song of Songs:**

This book is the song of love between God and man at the level of complete engagement. It frees us from the materialistic issues and lifts us from the perceptible to the spiritual connection of every thing in us with God.

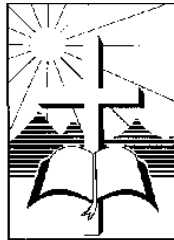
❖ **The book of Job:**

The book was most probably written during the era of Abraham to show the strife of Satan and the powers of darkness against the righteousness of man; it gave a philosophical visualization of pain and the strength with God.

❖ **The books of Prophecies:**

The directions of the prophets varied according to the era in which they conveyed the message. Before the captivity the directions of the prophets were concentrating on warning Israel and Judah of apostasy. They prophesied the assault of the nations, the slavery to these nations and finally the salvation that would come through Christ the Lord. There were many prophets, but those who wrote prophesy were the ones whose prophecies carried the picture of salvation through the Lord Christ, whether it was symbolic or authentic. These were: Jonah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. After these prophets the Assyrians captured Samaria then the following prophets appeared: Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Habakkuk and Ezekiel. After that Babylon captured Judah; Jeremiah prophesied about the return of the people from exile.

The Bible has given us a complete vision of the planning of God for salvation in this stage through the books of the holy history of the dealings of God, the books of wisdom and the human adoration of God and the books of prophecies that God sent to the humanity.



🕯 *Prayer* 🕯

Lord where shall I hide my face from your looks
My soul is ashamed in front of you
Our human history is so bad
In our dealings with you
On each day of our time
We carried our trespasses in sever cruelty
We dared painfully to slap your face
Oh Lord from the beginning
And I, the man, am causing straits to you
With your love was my denial
With your righteousness was my evil
With your lap were my thorns
Our human history is stained
With collectivity of evil and savageness of sin
Nevertheless you came to save us
And opened your arms to carry us
You endured our stubbornness and ignorance
To create from our distorted picture a marvellous one
Carrying your image to carry your face

Grant us my Lord
Grace in our days on this earth
To compensate for the days of previous cruelty
Yes
Would the church have dressed
The wounds of our painful past
Would you listen to our praise and thanks giving
Through which we send to you the glory, dignity and love
Out eternal love

Amen....

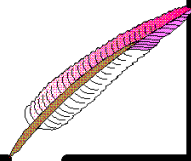


CHAPTER SIX

THE SYMBOLIC KINGDOM AWAITING THE TRUE ONE

The fifth stage: From the Captivity to the coming of the Lord Christ.

- ☆ The Divine Planning and the Story of the Man in this Stage:
 - ❖ The first stage: the period of captivity.
 - ❖ The second stage: from the reconstruction of the temple till the coming of Christ the Lord to him all the glory.
- ☆ How did history move until the coming of the Lord Christ to him all the glory?
- ☆ The vision of the planning of salvation in the periods immediately preceding the coming of the Lord Christ to him all the glory.
- ☆ The Scriptures that cover this stage.





MORDECAI LAMENTING BEFORE THE GATES OF THE PALACE. Cassone painting by Botticelli, about 1478.
Rome, Pallavicini Collection

The fifth stage

From the Captivity to the coming of the Lord Christ

☆ *The Divine Planning and the Story of the Man in this Stage:*

This stage could be divided into two periods:

☞ *The first:* is the period spent by the people in the land of Babylon, which was around seventy years that started when Nebuchadnezzar threatened Jerusalem and imposed his authority on them; it ended when the people returned from Babylon.

☞ *The second:* is the period between the return of the people from captivity till the coming of Jesus Christ to him all the glory, which was nearly five hundred years.

❖ **The first stage: the period of captivity:**

In this period the people returned to themselves and saw their situation in its reality. They have lost the picture of the people of God and took the picture of slaves again. They have lost the land which symbolised the kingdom of God; the temple which was the symbol of the presence of God among them was knocked down. They had no more any holy life; they were far away from worshiping God and the sacrifices and the Promised Land. Therefore they were longing to return back. They did not have for the correlation with God but His words that were sent in the earlier periods so they clung to them and started studying them very well

and refuted the prophecies. They met with Ezekiel the prophet and Daniel the prophet and devised a new way in which they could know God away from Jerusalem and the temple. That was the synagogues (or *Beit Knesset* in Hebrew which means House of Assembly) where the people used to meet to study the Law and pray to God. Thus they kept adhering to the words of the promise because they found that God had promised them a saviour who would reign on the throne of David and his kingdom will have no end. They maintained these prophecies and the meaning of salvation in them and waited for the saviour in the land of captivity until the kingdoms of the Chaldeans (Babylon – Assyria) were destroyed by the Persians. The Persian king Cyrus sympathised with the Jewish people; possibly God talked to him about the return of the people and rebuilding the temple, as it could be understood from the call for the return in **Ezra 1: 2**

“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah” (Ezra 1: 2)

Actually the people began to return after having learned their lesson very well and that was true freedom could only be achieved through life with God. The true glory could only be in the kingdom of God. Only those loving life with God returned; that was as a good sift which determined who would become the people of God to keep his covenant and work with him for the fulfilment of salvation.



◆ ***The temple as the centre of worship:***

The most important thing for the people on their return was to build the temple, so those who returned from captivity were concerned with the building of the temple of God. Several Persian kings (Artaxerxes and Darius) helped the people to bring the construction to completion. This showed that God started working on the plan of salvation not only through his people, who proved to be unable to carry this mission, but through preparing the entire world. The mission of this people at that time was limited to preserving the Law, being firm in applying the commandments of God and presenting the sacrifices in the temple. That was for the purpose of keeping the image in accordance with prophecies until Christ the Lord to him all the glory comes and the entire world know him and believe in him. With that all the signals and prophecies which God have previously prepared for the incarnation would have been satisfied. Everyone would believe in Christ the Lord when He comes in flesh from the people.

As for the mission of the people to preach God amidst the world through the stability of the monarchy, richness and wisdom, they have proved that they were not capable of doing that. Therefore God arranged a new picture to prepare the world to knowing Him and accepting the salvation that was coming from heaven in a new way. He dealt directly with the Persian kings to bring back his people and reconstruct the temple. This was clear in the message of Cyrus (Ezra 1:2) and also in the message of Darius to the people when he said to them:

“Moreover I issue a decree as to what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king’s expense from taxes on the region beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men,

so that they are not hindered. And whatever they need—young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who are in Jerusalem—let it be given them day by day without fail, that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons. Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict, let a timber be pulled from his house and erected, and let him be hanged on it; and let his house be made a refuse heap because of this. And may the God who causes His name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.” (Ezra 6: 8 - 12)

The king provided all the money, the rams and young bulls for the God of Israel; he even requested the people to pray for him. How could he do that if he was not a believer in God? This could more clearly be felt through Artaxerxes the king:

“This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel: Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect peace, and so forth. I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. And whereas you are being sent by the king and his seven counsellors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which is in your hand; and whereas you are to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counsellors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem; and whereas all the silver and gold that you may find in all the province of Babylon, along with the freewill offering of the people and the priests,

are to be freely offered for the house of their God in Jerusalem— now therefore, be careful to buy with this money bulls, rams, and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them on the altar of the house of your God in Jerusalem. And whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do it according to the will of your God. Also the articles that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem. And whatever more may be needed for the house of your God, which you may have occasion to provide, pay for it from the king's treasury. And I, even I, Artaxerxes the king, issue a decree to all the treasurers who are in the region beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, let it be done diligently, up to one hundred talents of silver, one hundred kors of wheat, one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribed limit. Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it diligently be done for the house of the God of heaven. For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? Also we inform you that it shall not be lawful to impose tax, tribute, or custom on any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God. And you, Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom, set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who are in the region beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and teach those who do not know them. Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether it be death, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.”
(Ezra 7:11 - 26)

◇ **God preparing the world in this stage:**

God had prepared the entire humanity in another way through the wise men of the nations who have acquired a spiritual vision and insight which they taught to the peoples about the only God and how to live with him. Even though this vision was still blurred with the accumulations of strange thoughts, but it was as a good preparation of the entire world to accept the knowledge of God and His coming incarnated.

The sixth and fifth centuries B.C. were rich in these individuals who influenced the peoples; they had a wonderful vision about the only God and how to worship him and wait for salvation. As mentioned earlier, this was from God to compensate for the slackness of the people of Israel in their mission as preachers of God amidst the nations in their life and firm relation with Him. **St. Klementis of Alexandria said:** *“The philosophers are the prophets of the nations.”*

▪ **Egypt:**

For example in the fifth dynasty of the Pharaohs they started to believe that the Pharaoh is a god born from his mother only with no human father but was born as a result of a divine word that was said by the great god.

▪ **Persia:**

In the sixth century B.C. appeared Zaradesht in Persia (contemporary Iran) who hoisted one God only and lowered the other gods of their status; this great god, whom he called (ahoramzada), was a god with human personality but it is unique and capable of doing every thing. He entered into holy war against the powers of evil and conquered them for the sake of his followers.

▪ **Nepal:**

Buddha lived in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. (567 – 487 B.C.) in the kingdom of Nepal. He advocated the second birth in other bodies; he also proclaimed the hard combat of man until he could reach the Nirvana which was a state that could qualify man to live in heavens through the (Buddhisatva) the saviour.

▪ **China:**

In the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. (551 – 479 B.C.) appeared Confucius in China; he taught very strong spiritual teachings. He advocated that there was a way in heaven called (Tee inn) which was a way that was existing earlier. It was the first condition in which man lived when he first existed. He talked about a god that resembled man and was very strong but not like other human beings.

▪ **Greece:**

In the period between (469 and 322 B.C.) appeared Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in Greece. They talked about man and the idealistic world which could not found be on earth. They also talked about god who preceded man in existence. There were other philosophers who prepared the minds to Christianity such as Stoic philosophy.

Those and other contemporary philosophers reached to a state of spiritual and mental pureness and wisdom seeking which made them recognise or prepare the way for true faith in their peoples. Their role was to stir the souls of the peoples towards the supreme powers which man needed and the importance of the saviour for the other life. However they could not see more than that and they kept waiting for the saviour in person. That is why we saw the magi who were wise men from the east coming to declare their faith in

Christ the Lord to him all the glory when he was born. Paul the Apostle found in Greece a temple for the unknown god who explained the need of man for the single and absolute god which they were unaware of and longing to live with.



❖ **The second stage: from the reconstruction of the temple till the coming of Christ the Lord to him all the glory**

In this period the role of the people was sanctification and waiting for the coming of Christ the Lord. The people has moved from stage of combat in accordance with the terrestrial body to the combat for the fulfilment of the promise and awaiting the salvation. After their return and the building of the altar, the people slackened again for fifteen years. Therefore God sent another prophesy through Haggai the prophet for the people to get up and construct the temple saying:

“Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Consider your ways! Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified,” says the LORD. “You looked for much, but indeed it came to little; and when you

brought it home, I blew it away. Why?” says the LORD of hosts.

“Because of My house that is in ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. Therefore the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labour of your hands.”

(Haggai 1: 7 - 11)

He also sent to them prophesies through Zechariah the prophet and Malachi to confirm his coming and the signs of this coming:

“But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,” Says the LORD of hosts.”

(Malachi 4: 2, 3)

Then there were no prophesies for four hundred years; that was to make everyone crave for the one who would come and speak in the name of God. The waiting stage was inevitable to each and every one as the basics that are necessary to transform the people to a kingdom did not exist. Therefore they had to wait for the realization of the kingdom of God for the following reasons:



◇ ***God was not present amidst them through the Ark of the Covenant:***

The Ark of Covenant was hidden by Jeremiah the prophet in the mountain before the captivity. This is stated in 2nd Maccabees 2:4-8

It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God. And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door. And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it. Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy. Then shall the Lord shew them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, as it was shewed under Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the place might be honourably sanctified" (2nd Maccabees 2: 4 - 8)

When the people returned from exile the ark did not exist, that meant they had to wait for the word of God that is descending from heaven anew just as the Law descended on the two tablets of the covenant earlier. They had to wait for the new manna that came down from heaven to be placed into the ark as it was previously. Therefore when the Lord Jesus Christ came he drew their attention that he was the word and the manna that was descending from heaven.

◆ ***The kingdom did not exist:***

They returned but they had no king and no kingdom; they were under the authority of another king and another monarchy: Persians, Greek then the Romans. They waited to the one who is going to realize the kingdom of David according to prophesies.

◆ ***The people was scattered:***

Not all the tribes returned, but the kingdom of Israel and Judah were scattered and the people was in need of a shepherd to gather them under his flag.

Therefore they were waiting for the word of God that was coming down from heaven and for the king to sit on the throne of David in his kingdom and guide his people and protect them under his strong banner. They explained prophesies in this manner and dreamed of fulfilling them.

☆ ***How did history move until the coming of the Lord Christ to him all the glory?***

The Persian kingdom kept control over the civilized world of which Egypt was an important part. The Persian Qambiz took over Egypt and sat on the throne of the Pharaohs until the Greek came to help the National Egyptian powers and defeated the Persians. Then came Alexander the Macedonian (Alexander the Great) and defeated Darius the Third in the battle of Issus. Alexander controlled the entire world and gave each country a form of sovereignty but submitting at the same time to the Greek Empire. Each people had the freedom of adoration and sovereignty but in subordination to Alexander. Alexander tried to fabricate compromising gods that could be worshiped by the entire world.

He tried for example to gather the gods of the Egyptians with those of the Greek. He succeeded with his attempts in many countries but could not approach the god of Israel in the same way. However he succeeded in making the Greek culture with its language, thoughts and philosophy a way of life that stretched all over the world. Alexander the Great founded in 329 B.C. Greek cities everywhere in the entire world. He came to the throne in 334 B.C., assumed his authority over the entire world in 325 B.C. and died in 323 B.C. after changing the history of the world. He managed to bind the entire world through the Greek thought and culture. That was an attempt to wipe up the identity of the peoples and make them associated with the Greek identity, thus he could guarantee that these peoples belong to the Empire. After the death of Alexander, the army officers fought each other for forty years until they divided the Empire among themselves. The Seleucids reigned over Syria and Ptolemaic over Egypt and Palestine. Ptolemy (Ptolemy) took a rather large community of Jews and allowed them to settle in Alexandria and in order to satisfy them he translated the Holy Scriptures to Greek by assigning that to seventy masters to do the translation; this is known as the Septuagint.

The land of Palestine in which the Jews dwelled remained the focus of struggle between the Ptolemaic and the Seleucids for a long period of time. The Jewish society was divided into two groups; one of them were strict as far as the gentiles were concerned and were hostile to anything that belongs to other nations (hence the Greek) including the language, culture, thought and way of life. Those used to be in continuous rebellion to get their freedom and recover the kingdom of the people of God from the control of the gentiles. The second group of the society were partisans to the Greek, they have accepted the Greek thought and way of life; they advocated the Greek architecture in building their

houses and cities; they agreed with the presence of the Greek in the kingdom. The situation went on like that until the Jews helped the Seleucids against the Ptolemaic hoping for independence and more freedom.

Actually in 198 B.C. the Seleucids took over Palestine; the Jews did not know that the Seleucids were very fanatic for their Greek culture. After the freedom of adoration and the self sovereignty which was enjoyed by the people during the authority of the Ptolemaic, the Seleucids ruled tyrannically and the degree of persecution escalated during the rule of Antiochus Epiphanes the fourth that came into the land and removed the chief priest and looted the temple.

In 167 B.C. following a revolt of the people, he entered Jerusalem with his army and took his revenge of the people. He looted the gear of the temple and the altar and prohibited the Jewish worship. He presented sacrifices for the Greek gods on the altar of God in Jerusalem; he went too far in insulting the people and their religion by slaughtered pigs on the altar. He prohibited circumcision and humiliated the people very much. This continued until a priest called Matthias, with his five sons and all those that were zealous for their Judaism, revolted and fought the Greek. Matthias died and the revolution was led by his son Judah whom they named the “Maccabeus” (meaning the “hammer” for his harshness). He actually won over Antiochus and drove the Greek out. The struggle and wars continued, then Judah died and his brother Simon the Maccabeus took over to be followed by his son John Hyrcanus in 134 B.C. At that time the Pharisees accumulated public pressure to face the party of the Sadducees who were pro-Greek. Hyrcanus died in 104 B.C. and his son Aristobulus took over to be followed by Alexander Jannaeus who was on the throne

for 27 years. Alexander Jannaeus killed fifty thousands Pharisees because they opposed him in assuming the post of Chief Priest knowing that his mother was a Samaritan. He was the first to introduce the punishment by crucifixion in Jerusalem. When he died his son Hyrcanus the second took over the post of Chief Priest while his second son Aristobulus the second took over the post of Chief Commander of the army. However they fought each other and drew the country into civil war as a result of which Rome had to interfere, as Rome had become the great empire of that time and was trying to seize the influence of the Greek empire. Thus Pompey the emperor of Rome intervened and captured Aristobulus and enthroned Hyrcanus the second as the king on Jerusalem. When Pompey entered Jerusalem and got acquainted with the temple and the god of the Jews he was dazzled and returned to Rome to tell about God and the temple.

In 48 B.C. Julius Caesar took over the throne of Rome. He had an Idumean friend Antipater who requested him to appoint his two sons as governors over Jerusalem. He actually did appoint Phasael and Herod as governors. He divested Antonio and Octavios of the title: “Governor and King of Judea”. This is Herod that Jesus Christ to him all the glory was born at the end of his era. After his death the kingdom was divided between his sons: Philip, Herod, Antipas and Archaelus. Thus the land of Judea became a part of the Roman Empire; the Roman governor had the right to interfere in the issues of the temple. This made the people in constant revolt especially from a group called “the zealots”, while the Pharisees were advocating complete separation of them.

The situation continued like that until the coming of the Lord Christ to him all the glory. The people under the feelings of distress, persecution and humiliation were pressingly asking for the coming of the saviour. They even included in their ritualistic prayers the litanies for the coming of Christ the Saviour.

Thus history became a pressing factor over the feelings of the people to make them cornered more and more in a single thought which was the coming of the Saviour and always asking for the Messiah. Unfortunately however when the Lord Christ to him all the glory came, they rejected him because he did not fulfil the terrestrial dream, the national kingdom and the materialistic benefits.



☆ *The vision of the planning of salvation in the periods immediately preceding the coming of the Lord Christ to him all the glory:*

God utilized all the circumstances to prepare the world and humanity for the salvation. History, thought, culture, war, peace, kings and politics were like tools that paved a road for the world to know our Christ the Saviour. Thousands of years passed in the preparation of man for the way of salvation and the return to life.

The time was approaching and the strings were being congregated from their scatter in the world after Babylon Tower and the split of the world into separate nations with different languages and cultures. All these were congregating before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to melt into the strong need that lies in the innermost of man since his fall calling and seeking the incarnation and redemption. That was the situation at the fullness of time which was predestined to precede the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory.

As the Jews were the centre of proclamations and prophesies, it was necessary that the world know them and mingle with them. We saw that they were living in the heart of the world, and then came the empires from the east to fight for that land such as the Assyrians, Babylonians and the Persians. Each nation came and knew the glorified god of Israel and witnessed some thing about him and his power. Later on came the empires from the west to know the god of Israel; the Greek and the Romans invaded Jerusalem and could get acquainted with the god of Israel. We saw Ptolemy translating the Old Testament and sanctify it; we found Pompey the Roman eager to know more about the god of Israel and entering the temple to inform Rome about it.

All that was an introduction for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory, and each nation entering and knowing the mighty god in Jerusalem asked the Jews: “why were you abandoned by your god?” the answer was: “because we deserted and disobeyed him, but we are waiting for the Messiah the Saviour according to the promises and prophesies.”

Now, dear reader, I am going to present to you the picture of the planning of salvation in preparing the entire world as suitable atmosphere that could accept the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory when he comes and be proclaimed to the entire world east and west.

❖ **The unity of the world:**

Three centuries before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory, the entire world was split into peoples and nations fighting each other. The kings of Assyria, Babylon and Persia could not melt the entire world into single empire; they could merely impose their authority over the east, but the west was politically detached and the only link between east and west was trade. Therefore the thoughts and religions were separate and if the Lord Jesus Christ came in the east the west would not have sensed that.

Therefore it was inevitable that the entire world be a single unit to preach the good news about the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour and have the atmosphere prepared to believe in him. For that reason we found that during the three centuries that preceded the birth of Jesus, the world was in political unity. Alexander the Great came to create a Greek world that had an effect over the globe; not only on the military aspects but also on the cultural aspects and the way of life. The Romans followed to complete the picture of the single

world. This led to the acceptance of the idea of the single saviour for the entire world and the one Catholic Church that does not take sides with a country, race or colour. Following the incident of the tower of Babylon the world was split into different nations, but it got –thanks to the Romans- a road system that linked all the countries of the world; that facilitated later the preaching about the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory.

❖ **The unity of language and culture:**

There was another hindrance to preaching the saviour, namely the language; how could the world know him while they were torn between different languages, thoughts and cultures. This continued until the Greek culture spread all over the world. All the peoples began to know the Greek language as a result of spreading the Greek culture all over the world by Alexander the Macedonian. Greek became the language of the cultivated and intellectual world. Those individuals are the ones having effects over the thoughts of peoples. The wide spread of the Greek culture with its philosophy and thoughts prepared the world to research into philosophical issues that try to find answers to the following five topics:

God – Man – Universe - Existence and Fate - Morals

That led man in the entire world to come up with questions about life and death. In reality no one could find an answer except in Jesus Christ. That is why we hear Pilate asking the Lord Jesus Christ:

“What is truth?” (John 18: 38)

Everyone was thinking in a philosophical logic as a result of the overrunning of the Greek culture of all the mentalities.

❖ **The unity in the need for the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory:**

Following the spread of the Roman Empire began an era which is called by historians: “The Era of the Roman Peace”. Since Augustus Caesar took over the throne of Rome peace prevailed, and with no wars the world moved towards the metaphysical matters, i.e. thinking about higher issues that are beyond nature and beyond the perceivable.

However the Greek culture and philosophy could not satisfy the needs of man and the numerous questions. Myths and legends were not enough anymore to satisfy the need of man for knowledge; they were not convincing to his mind anymore. The idle stone gods and the symbolic gods were not satisfactory to the hunger of his spirit. The thrones of all the gods all over the world were shaking in the period that directly preceded the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. The traditional gods of the eastern countries like Persia, Assyria; Babylon and the Pharaohs diminished in the eyes of their people after the invasion of the world by Alexander the Great and later by the Romans; they felt that their gods were not capable of protecting them any more, so they left these gods.

The philosophical radiance and the great glory given to the traditional gods in Greece were also shaken. They believed according to the old myths that these gods lived in a society on the Alp mountains; when they climbed these mountains they could not see Hermes, Hades, Jupiter or Zeus the very much respected gods. Therefore they rebounded into moral decline and a tendency towards frivolity prevailed in Greece; those who used to hold firmly to these gods were declined in giving them the same prestige. They started advocating the unknown god for which St. Paul found an altar in Athens and said to them:

“For as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:”
(Acts 17: 23)

On the other hand we would find the Roman world which was filled with cruelty, arrogance, evil and perversion spread a feeling of general resentment of the Roman gods among other nations. The philosophers failed in changing life and giving new hope in another life with unity in thought and religion and they searched for the only god the creator of heavens and earth. **The intellectuals advocated the well known saying:** *“one world or no word at all”*.

Voices rose high asking for a change in the life of the world and humanity. They continued insisting on the need for the one to come and change the life of the human beings and give man his eternal existence. Therefore the Greek world was fascinated by Christianity as it filled their needs and gave them the answers to all the desires of mind and spirit. The Roman world was also fascinated with the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory, as they found in him their needs for spiritual power that is more than the power of the body and the power of war. All philosophies and gods of the nations dropped down when they faced Christianity as they could not fulfil the needs of man.

The spread of the Jews in various countries of the world had an important influence as their religious thinking was also spread with them and thus the world knew their mighty god. That was one of the important factors in the fall of paganism there. The unity of god became an acceptable philosophical logic and the ethical philosophies like the Stoicism and the Platonism advocate love and

tolerance which rendered the world ready to receive Christianity with its superlative principles.

❖ **Jews in dispersion:**

Those were the Jews who were dispersed all over the world during the history of the Jews since the captivity of Israel by the Assyrians; they lived out of the kingdom and had another life in the new societies. However they continued to hold firmly to Judaism and formed their own small communities which had the role of mission work to prepare the nations; through these Jews the world new the saviour expected in accordance with prophecies.

Those Jews were scattered in many different locations in the world; during the fifth century B.C. the God of Israel was worshiped in Babylon and Egypt through families that immigrated to these locations. In Egypt they settled in the district known as (The Island of Failla) in the southern part of Egypt. With time the scatter of Jews increased all over the world that in 139 B.C. the Roman authorities forced the Jews residing in Rome to leave it being accused of polluting the Roman thought as a result of the spreading of adoration of the god of Israel.

In 103 B.C. the worship of the god of Israel spread in Ediabiya which was one of the provinces of the old Assure that lies on river Zab (one of the tributaries of the river Tigris); all the people of the province accepted the Jewish adoration including the king. They were circumcised and kept the Jewish Law. **The Roman historian Strabo** wrote about the Jews during the era of Augustus Caesar saying: *“They spread in all the countries and there is no place in the entire world that is lacking of them.”*

Recent discoveries proved the stretch of Judaism all over the world; not less than 150 locations were discovered that date back to the period before the birth of Jesus Christ in which Judaism life was spread. These locations such as Syria, Mesopotamia, France, Spain and North Africa; the book of Apostolic Acts confirms this:

“Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.” (Acts 17: 17)

Also:

**“And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.”
(Acts 18: 4)**

The number of Jews in Alexandria during the era of Alexander the Great reached to one hundred thousands.

History informs that when the Torah was presented after translation to Ptolemy he expressed his approval and bowed to the manuscript and put it in the library. This shows that the entire world gave the prestige to Judaism. This spread of the Jews showed the preparation done through the dispersion of the people in the entire world. The world knew through them the god of Israel and the expected Messiah coming from this people according to prophecies.



❖ **The Jewish parties:**

God used everything that was in the world and the Jewish society for his salvation work. Even the divisions of the people into parties had its use in the salvation of man. The Jewish society was divided into parties; some of them were associated with the Greek like the Sadducees and the others were very much adhering to the Law and very conservative against anything coming from other nations like the Pharisees. That was very important in fulfilling the salvation; it was inevitable that the work should be in the two directions at the same time. The Jews had to be open for the nations so that the latter would know the expected Messiah. It was vital that the principles of the Jewish society were not lost, to prevent the thoughts and habits of the nations from penetrating the Jewish life and possibly affect them and their symbols might dissolve in the new picture. Therefore when the symbols were fulfilled in Jesus Christ there were people who recognize them and believe in their fulfilment.

☆ *The Scriptures that cover this stage:*

The revelation completes the picture of the planning of salvation through the following historical scriptures:

- ❖ **Ezra:** presents a continuation of the plan of salvation regardless of the political events; we see the return of the people and building the temple to start a new phase of the plan of salvation.
- ❖ **Nehemiah:** describes the organization of the people after their return and how did the Jewish society rise again and how did they preserve their identity as the people of God.

- ❖ **Ester:** is a story that took place during the period of captivity. God had a marvellous objective to present through this story that is regardless of captivity and exile God was with his people and his salvation work was not hindered. His work of salvation was not limited to a specific place or to special individuals, as whoever seeks him will find him.

- ❖ **1st and 2nd Maccabees:** describes the struggle between the Jewish people and the Greek for the sanctums, God's adoration and the temple; how God maintained his people and granted them the victory. God cleansed the kingdom of the impurities related to the Greek adoration and preserved the temple, that was as an introduction to the coming of the saviour. The books present the condition of the people before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and describe the atmosphere related to salvation at that phase.

- ❖ **Judith:** this book tells a story that took place during the Greek persecution and shows the firmness of the people and their honesty with God regardless of the circumstances.

- ❖ **The books of wisdom:** it was inevitable that the revelation provides in this phase the books of wisdom that record the impressions of the people and their holy feelings in facing the renewed work of God after the return from exile. David the prophet and Solomon the wise man wrote the sacred feelings of humanity that declared the will of man in front of the work of God. They also showed the love of man to this life that was sought by God. In this period after the period of apostasy which was before the captivity, the wise men of Israel presented their feelings formulated in two books:

- ❖ **Wisdom:** this is a preaching book showing to the Jewish people the strength of life in faith and showed to the Greek people the glory and spirituality of the Jewish life.
- ❖ **Joshua Ben Sirach:** this book was written to preserve the identity of the Jewish people amidst a variable world showing the beauty and splendour of life with God.

And Last....

- ❖ **The books of prophecies:** these were prophecies sent by god at the beginning of this phase; some of them were during the period of captivity such as Daniel and Ezekiel, others were after the return from captivity such as Haggai, Zechariah, Obadiah and Malachi. After Malachi the heavens were silent for four hundred years so that everyone should listen carefully and all the eyes fixed towards heavens waiting for any sound speaking in the name of the Lord, or for any work coming from heavens. They continued like that reviewing prophecies, organizing them and adding to the general rituals some litanies specific for the coming of the saviour. The Jewish life was filled with their eagerness in waiting for the Messiah the saviour. The groans of the people were crying to heavens asking for the Christ; everyone was looking at heavens and waiting for salvation. Their minds were searching prophecies in wait for the craving of the generations that the prophets talked about and whom they sensed in the symbols and rituals. They remained like that till the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory.

All that, dear reader, combined together in a wonderful integration from history to thought and politics; from individual life to the group movements between peoples, **in order that the bells of time should ring in front of the eyes of the entire world announcing the fullness of time for the coming of the awaited saviour our Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory.**



🕯 *Prayer* 🕯

Come along my beloved
To join the angles in praising God
For his love and mercy
Let us go out to the silent nature
And tell it about his deeds with us
Let us consecrate our lives to him
The heart, the thought and the will
He has done wonderful deeds for us
He collected the remnants of the body of humanity
That was dispersed from the war with Satan
Then He returned to give him life and subsistence
So we took life anew
After we had death as our destiny
Yes, O Lord
If it wasn't for your hands that restored to us
Life anew
Through your marvellous plan
Our life now would have been
A broken meaning
And an unsatisfied objective.



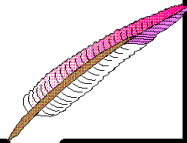
Amen...

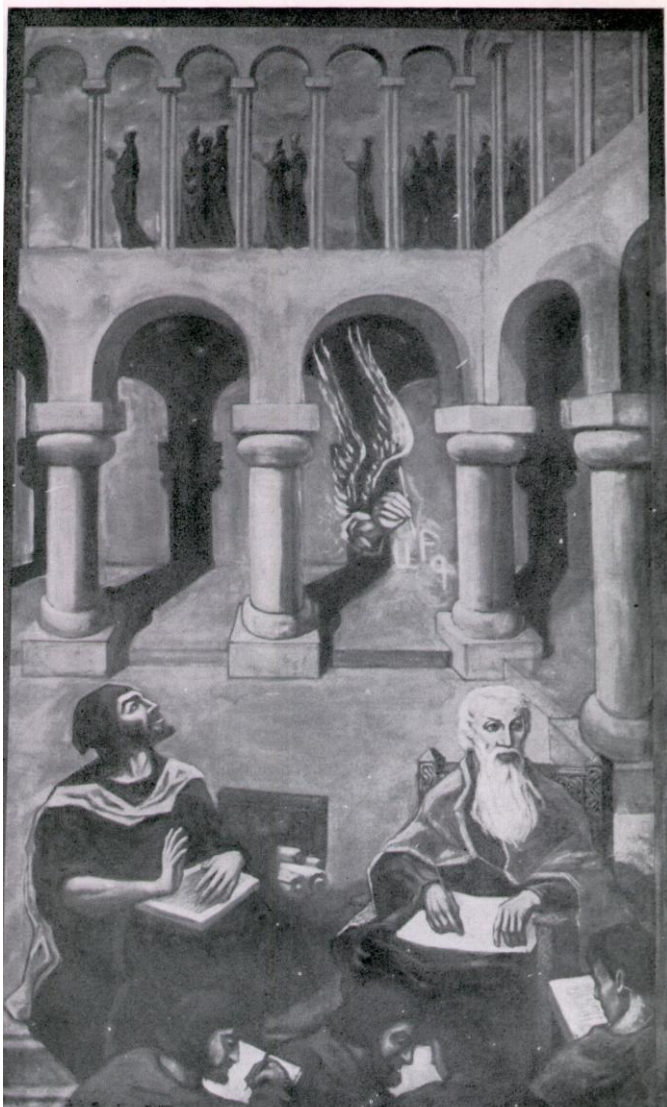
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE REAL KINGDOM FOR MAN IS WITHIN HIM

The sixth stage: From the coming of the Lord Christ to His Ascension

- ☆ The Divine Planning and the Story of Man in this Stage.
- ☆ The Lord Jesus Christ is the craving of the Old Testament.
- ☆ The Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament.
- ☆ The law of salvation in the New Testament.
- ☆ The scriptures of the New Testament that tell about this stage.





The sixth stage

From the coming of the Lord Christ to His Ascension

☆ The Divine Planning and the Story of Man in this Stage:

After the time of distress that passed with man since his fall came the time of joy, and after the time of slavery to evil and the power of darkness came the time of freedom of glory and kingdom of light.

After the time of the symbols, the cloud and the veil separating the sanctuary and man came the time of the truth, the clear vision of God, the fall of the veil and the opening of Heavens to the earth.

Humanity was for thousands of years in grief, ignorance and slavery until the coming of the Saviour with whom our nature was renewed. The picture of the entire universe was distorted with no beauty whatsoever until the coming of the Lord Christ to him all the glory to give the picture back its lost beauty and lift the curse off the entire universe. During the years that passed before the birth of Jesus Christ the divine plan was trying to bring man to a state in which the relations with him becomes feasible until the coming of the Lord Christ and in him the spiritual capabilities of man would be changed. Through Him the Holy Spirit works in man anew to become his kingdom and restore his original picture.

The intention of the planning in all the previous stages was to create a temporary state for the terrestrial kingdom at the symbolic level through which God could be present with his people. That was without real unity with the people; they could not even come

near the location where He was. The veil separated the sanctuary and the place where man can be. No one could ever approach or touch the Ark of the Covenant. There were numerous numbers of prohibitions and instructions in the way of the people with God.

However at this stage, God himself came down to the earth and was incarnate; the one who used to descent in the Ark and no one could ever touch him or even think of seeing him descended into the manhood and walked amidst people and they touched him. He even presented himself to death in order that the judgment against man could be lifted and He became the sacrifice that fulfilled the divine justice. He became the subject of love, through him we all melt and exist in him to be united with God, thus we live anew. He restored our hope in life again.

The Lord Christ to him all the glory was the aim of all the plans of salvation that were designed by God since the fall of man. Therefore we see in the Old Testament history that was not completed except in Jesus Christ; prophesies kept waiting the fulfilment and completion as they were meaningless without Jesus Christ.

Thus we cannot understand the goal or the meaning or the way that was intended by God in the history of salvation without Jesus Christ. St. Paul the Apostle said in that line:

“But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.”
(2 Corinthians 3: 14)

He also said:

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Romans 10: 4)

Yes, the complete picture of the two Testaments reflects to us the magnificence of the design; the New Testament does not overrule the Old Testament but completes it and manifests its beauty and strength.

**“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil.”
(Matthew 5: 17)**

The New therefore is the depths of the Old; the Old without the New is meaningless. It is like the shadow to the truth; proclaiming the truth does not mean that the shadow is false but the proclamation of the truth enables us to understand the reality of the shadow.

☆ *The Lord Jesus Christ is the craving of the Old Testament:*

The New Testament starts with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ to him all the glory and in him all the Law and prophesies were fulfilled. He lived as a human being to ensure to humanity, and add to its spiritual credit, the possibilities of sacred life. Then he revealed himself to the people in Galilee first then in Judea and Jerusalem. Later on He proclaimed his kingdom that was realized with redemption on the cross. He rose from the dead to give humanity its resurrection. He ascended to open the heavens in front of our nature and sent to us his Holy Spirit to unite us in him, make us heavens for him and a throne for the glory of his Godhood. In the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed as a king

giving life to his people. In him prophecies about the Kingdom of God, which had been drawn in details to the prophets throughout the history of the Old Testament, were fulfilled. His image in prophecies was:

❖ **A king, a Saviour and Reviver**

This is how Isaiah the prophet saw him:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined. You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy; they rejoice before You according to the joy of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For You have broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every warrior’s sandal from the noisy battle, and garments rolled in blood, will be used for burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9: 2- 6)

So he was the one born with the wonderful name, who would be carrying the government of humanity as a prince of peace and reconciliation, thus he was the mighty God.

Jeremiah the prophet saw him like this:

**“Behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
⁶ In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. “Therefore, behold, the days are coming,” says the LORD, “that they shall no longer say, ‘As the LORD**

lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land." (Jeremiah 23: 5 - 8)

So he was the Saviour who would give piety to his people.

❖ **The son of David:**

More specifically, his blessed person would be coming from the offspring of David:

**"There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."
(Isaiah 11: 1)**

Also:

**"In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth"
(Jeremiah 33: 15)**

Ezekiel who saw Him in David the prophet who preceded Ezekiel by a very long period of time:

**"David My servant shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them."
(Ezekiel 37: 24)**

❖ **Born in Bethlehem:**

Prophecy defines where He was going to be born also:

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.” (Micah 5: 3)

He was the king; the earth should have been ready for his coming.

❖ **Just in his judgement and his authority over the entire world is eternal:**

Since he was the real king, there should be prophecy that telling us about his new kingdom and the characteristics of life with him so that we would have the desire for his coming and life with him:

“Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law.” Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out,

Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: “I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. I am the LORD, that is My

name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.” (Isaiah 42: 1- 9)

❖ **The king proclaimed his kingdom in Jerusalem:**

Prophesies defined the form of the proclamation of his kingdom, as he would enter Jerusalem as a king but meek; therefore we saw him entering on a donkey and a colt the foal of a donkey:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zachariah 9: 9)



❖ **He would suffer pain and die for the sake of his people:**

Here we come to the greatest of pictures and the strongest of prophesies, these were prophesies of passion, crucifixion and redemption. He was the one told about and the one seen in prophesies: the incarnate God and the king who came to proclaim his kingdom, crucified, humiliated and died ... but why? According to prophesy to bear our sorrows and to intercede for the transgressors.

Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD

to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.”
(Isaiah 53:1-12)

☆ *The Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament:*

In spite of the strength of prophecies and the clarity of the picture that was proclaimed by heavens to us, there are no words that are suitable to describe him when he came down incarnated. Words are incapable and the meanings are so shallow to describe his blessed person and the strength of the work of his Divinity and the softness of the feelings which he presented to humanity; that is what we see in the New Testament. The evangelists described him so that we know our Christ, our friend and our beloved who bent to lift us. His mighty image that prophecies spoke about was over the kingdom of evil; his salvation and victories were not over a terrestrial kingdom but over the kingdom of Satan. His power and victory were not for the terrestrial life but were over death; that is what the Jews did not understand. They thought that the salvation prophecies were about terrestrial homeland and worldly or temporary kingdom. When the Lord Christ explained to them that, they rejected him and handed him over to be crucified, as he said to them:

**“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”
(John 18: 36)**

What a great love...

What words could we use to describe our feelings towards our beloved and god?

Humanity could not even

Think of approaching his glory

But He modestly came down to be one with us

And became a king not on golden thrones

But on the fleshy hearts

How amazing

The god of life incarnate to take our nature

And embraced our death so that life that is in him and from him would flow in our race



☆ *The law of salvation in the New Testament:*

1. Unite with our nature to create us again:

God the word, the eternal son descended from heavens as prophesied and united with the nature of manhood, but without mingling, without confusion and without alteration; i.e. the natures did not mingle, confused or changed. Thus we were reconciled with God himself; St. Paul the Apostle said:

“For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”
(Colossians 1:19, 20)

He also said:

“that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation”
(2nd Corinthians 5:19)

This is the aim of incarnation and redemption; God was incarnate to unite with us and reshape our nature again in him. With his death and resurrection he opened the way of eternal life to us and **Saint Anba Athanasius the Apostle said:** *“if a painting is stained, then the owner of the painting should come and help the painter to restore the painting on the same canvas”*. **He also said:** *“the earthy body took communion in the nature of the word”*. **St. Hilary said:** *“these are the secrets of the celestial deliberations which were determined before the world was set up. It was inevitable that the only son of God becomes man with his own will so that man can dwell in God for ever; He has incarnate to take us in his soul”*.

2. Complete the obedience to lift the image of revolt and old enmity off us:

The whole humanity was represented in him that is why he obeyed the father in everything as he was representing us. Humanity failed throughout its entire time in completing the plan of obedience to the father. Revolt was accompanying all the chapters of the story of man's life from Adam till the era of the Law; therefore came Jesus Christ to him all the glory to complete the plan of obedience in front of the father so that humanity could live anew in the obedience of the son to the father on our behalf.

St. Irenaeus said: *“As there is only one son to complete the will of the father, and only one human race in which the secrets of God could be completed and we cannot examine the wisdom of God through which He brings his creation to perfection by sharing the body of his son with them, and changing their image to His; that the one born from him, his first born descends to the creation and embrace them in his soul... He raised them to his soul and makes them dash up above the angels and become in the image of God and his likeness”.*

St. Hilary said: *“the whole humanity was in Christ through his manhood, and Christ exists now in the entire humanity by way of his Divinity”.* All that was to make our new man, which is in Him and to admit us into his secrets to live for ever.

How great is his love to the falling humanity, as in the fullness of time He descended incarnate to extend his hands to our nature and pull it out of the deprivation of the image and the authority of evil and slavery to death.

St. Cyril the Great said: *“the human personality in general was being formed anew in Christ”.*

3. Presented himself to be slain to redeem us:

He lived a short period on earth among us and crossed into the depths of the humanity clarifying the depths of the spiritual life. He ascended the altar to present himself as a sacrifice on the cross and take the death sentence in front of the Father. He was the priest and the sacrifice at the same time; He presented himself to death and rose from death so that whoever is united in him would also rise and be saved from the power of death. He would give them his Holy Spirit thus they have the dwelling of God in them. St Paul the Apostle said about the work of atonement:

“whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed” (Romans 3: 25)

He also said:

**“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”
(Romans 5: 8)**

He said also:

**“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?
(Romans 8: 32)**

Also:

“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2: 8)

And:

**“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption”
(Hebrews 9: 12)**

Thus the affair of the painful death ended as with His crucifixion we were reconciled with Heavens, and we could dare to enter to the sanctuary and eternal life with God. **St. Athanasius the Apostle said:** *“Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with his own will allowed them to lead him all the way to death, and we see in him the image of every goodness and immortality”*. **St. Irenaeus said also:** *“Salvation is gathering everything in Christ”*.

The amazing truth is that in Christ the face of the universe, life and everything was changed. Jesus Christ became the centre of life in the entire world with all the different nationalities, thoughts and believes; the birth of the Lord Christ became the event that is used to date the history of life thus we say year so and so A.D. (Anno Domini which means the Year of the Lord) and year so and so B.C. (Before Christ).

Would Jesus Christ be the centre of the personal life of every human being thus he dates his life with the existence of Christ in it, and He becomes the centre of all the behaviours, thoughts and feelings.



☆ *The scriptures of the New Testament that tell about this stage:*

This stage is covered by the four Gospels that have a common goal which is presenting salvation to the entire world. However each of the Gospels was written to present a specific aspect of salvation, thus the picture is complete with the four aspects:

- ❖ **St. Matthew the Evangelist:** He wrote his Bible to present Jesus Christ the expected Saviour according to the Jews and the prophesised picture; this is a very important aspect of our faith in the Lord Christ to him all the glory, as we believe in his Divinity when we see him in prophesies.

- ❖ **St. Mark the Evangelist:** He presented the Lord Christ to him all the glory as the mighty god who came to save humanity with his power and authority; this is also a very important aspect in the Good News as all the nations were dreaming of the mighty god the saviour as mentioned previously.

- ❖ **St. Luke the Evangelist:** He presented the redeemer and saviour of the entire world, the god incarnate who opened his bosom to all the human beings (Jews and Gentiles) to establish a personal relation with each and every one who believe in him and unite in him. In the Gospel according to Luke, each one of us can find his own model in the relations of the Lord Christ to him all the glory with humanity that are mentioned by this Evangelist.

❖ **St. John the Evangelist:** He presented to us the god who existed before the ages. All the philosophers of the world and the wise men of Israel thought about him. This god descended and incarnated to save us and lift us to his glory. With his love he attracts every one to the salvation and glory that are prepared before the establishment of the world. This is a gladdening, consoling and dazzling to the human soul.

It is an inclusive vision of our Christ and Saviour that was essential to the faith, the preaching and to our individual fullness with the Lord Jesus. However when we read the gospels we should keep in mind the following two comments:

1. The gospels are not intended to present a biography of the Lord Christ to him all the glory, because that is impossible as he is not a human only but also god. To describe him from the human angle does not give his real personality. He was not created to have a beginning and an end but he is the eternal God. Therefore the gospels have presented the journey of Jesus Christ on earth and not his biography, or in other words presented what Jesus did on earth but did not write the history of his blessed person. The gospels are similar to icons painted in words for the Lord Christ to him all the glory.
2. We should notice that there is a great difference between presenting the teachings that are pertinent to a specific faith or tenet written in a literary form, and the good news about a person where all the thoughts and principles are integrated and in him all prophecies fulfilled and upon him is founded all the ways of life and salvation.

This is our Christ
In him our features became
Maturely existing
And our feelings shaped
Precisely in our love to him
Before incarnation the feelings of man towards God
Were without any features
We could barely forge the string of love
But in Christ
Love is abundant
And the bosoms are everlasting
And the embrace is inclusive
As he is our father in heavens
And he is seated on his throne which is our hearts
Whoever sees him could never abandon him
Whoever knows him would never be filled without him
As in each one of us there is a natural desire for him
Because we live in him
By him we exist
And for him we were created.

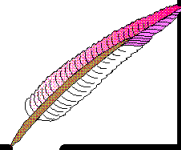


CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CHURCH IS THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST ON EARTH

The seventh stage: From the Descend of the Holy Spirit to the Advent

- ☆ The Church is the return to the state of Paradise.
- ❖ The sacraments and the new creation.
- ☆ Scriptures that cover this stage.





The seventh stage

From the Descend of the Holy Spirit to the Advent

Here comes the final stage in the planning of salvation of mankind which is the stage of salvation in the Church, where the enjoyment of the blessings of incarnation, the grace of salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit. In this stage we encounter the fulfilment of the will of God in creating man. When man unites with the Lord Christ to him all the glory and lives in him at the personal level, he is re-created anew. With that the intention of God is fulfilled; but outside the church remains the world that is not renewed and not saved.

☆ *The Church is the return to the state of Paradise.*

We return to the same original image that God created us with. Man has to choose sanctity freely to live for ever; but sanctity now is Christ himself, so whoever chooses Christ would get life and whoever is firm in him lives forever.

❖ *The sacraments and the new creation:*

This new creation takes place inside the Church as man who wants to receive salvation comes into the Church and be saved. This is similar to the situation during the era of Noah's Ark; whoever enters the Church and dies with Christ in the Sacrament of Baptism acquires salvation.

Thus the person will be qualified to have the Spirit of God dwelling within him. He can receive the Sacrament of Confirmation of the Holy Spirit through the Holy Chrism (Myron). The Spirit of God works powerfully within him to change him from the image of the world to the image and features of Christ to him all the glory. The Holy Spirit continuously renews him with the work of the grace and cleanses him off transgressions which he begins to reject. He declares his rejection through the Sacrament of Penitence and Confession; with this Sacrament he confirms that there is no community between him and the kingdom of darkness. Thus he becomes qualified to be a member in the body of the Lord through the Sacrament of the Eucharist and becomes part of the glorified Church.

In the Church we can see God restoring man to his original glory and remove all the consequences of sin as we could see from the following:

1. Sin brought death to man; he could not be living with God anymore and Christ gives him new life in Baptism through the Church.
2. Sin gave rise to depravation to the human nature; Christ gives himself on the Altar so that the believer will unite with Him through the Eucharist in the Church.
3. Sin generated enmity; Christ sent his Spirit to dwell within the souls that have been baptized so dies the old and lives the new in which the Spirit of God can dwell in the Sacrament of the Holy Chrism (Myron). This can not be given except by the authority of the Church.

4. Sin caused dispersion in the unity of mankind; Christ made us one in him, and through his Holy Spirit we acquired the capability of one life and one thought through the Church. That is what we saw in the form of tongues of fire that made all the languages understandable on the Pentecost. With the Eucharist our unity is complete on the Altar even though we were different in colour, language and race.
5. Sin caused a separation between heavens and earth; Christ tore the separating veil and heavens became open; in the Church we are considered to be in heavens.
6. With sin God reigns no more over the heart and life of man; with Christ God became the true king and his kingdom exists in the Church and is firm in its bosoms.

Thus through the Church we became in his image, and in his image we became his Church.

The law of the planning of general salvation is that the Old Testament is completed in Christ and that the Lord Christ is given in his Church.

The Old Testament shows the needs and weaknesses and the image of the falling man. There we listen to the cravings to salvation, the promises, prophecies about salvation and see the dealings of God along the ages and the way of living with him at the symbolic level. Then comes the New Testament to realize salvation in the Lord Christ to him all the glory; He restored the lost life, settled all the needs and lifted all the weaknesses. The picture of man who was with no hope in the Old Testament disappears in the New Testament in Christ. The longings to salvation, promises and prophecies are realized in Christ. The symbols that were worthless restored their values through their

commitment to him. The will of God the father is completed through Him; even we became beloved in Him.

If the Lord Christ to him all the glory has done all that to whoever unites with him, there still remains a very important question on how could these salvation matters be realized at the personal level? All that could only be fulfilled through **The Church**; as everything that was for Christ was given to the Church where the possibilities of salvation and redemption are given by the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Church is the glory of Christ, his righteousness and his justification. In it is all his love to humanity, his power and his work. Thus the symbol in the Old Testament is realized in Christ and everything that is for the Christ is fulfilled in the Church and that is how everyone can be saved.

☆ *Scriptures that cover this stage:*

After the ascension of the Lord Christ to him all the glory the picture of the world and man changed, we have in Christ the possibility of direct life with God in the Church. What is there for man now is to accomplish the internal and personal change for each one of the believers. The Church of Christ, which has the straight faith, is the only place where the Holy Spirit dwells and it is the centre of his work. We see in the book of **Acts of the Apostles** the work of the Holy Spirit in instituting the Church and its wide spreading.

After the ascension the Apostles remained for ten days praying and ready to receive the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit descended upon them on the Pentecost the whole place was shaken to announce the birth of the Church and the Kingdom of God in the New Testament which is formed in the features of Christ and his

image. The book of Acts informs about the wide spreading of the Kingdom in Jerusalem and Judea then to the far ends of the globe through the preaching of the Patriarchs the Apostles especially our teacher St. Paul the Apostle.

After the establishment of the Church, which is the Kingdom of God on earth, the Bible provides us with more details concerning the building of the church from the faith, organizational and pastoral points of view through **the fourteen epistles of St. Paul the Apostle, the epistle of St. James, the two epistles of St. Peter, the three epistles of St. John and the epistle of St. Jude.**

After getting acquainted with the church of the New Testament, understand its theology and how to live in it, the revelation transfer us to the last stage of the divine planning which is the journey of the eternal life in the **Book of Revelation**. This is the only prophetic book in the New Testament as it informs us about the picture of the Church in eternity. It is a gladdening book as it tells about the joy of heavens and the glory of eternity in a symbolic superior style that clarifies the picture of eternity and the victory of the Kingdom of God in Christ; it describes the end of evil and the kingdom of darkness. It shows the glory of those who walked with God from the Church of the Old and New Testaments. In this book we can hear the tunes of praise and feel the sunrise of the eighth day which is the joyful eternity.

The story comes to the end with the hope for eternal joy and the glory of the righteous in the kingdom of their heavenly father and their beloved one who died for them and raised and ascended into heavens to prepare the places for them. He is bringing back those souls that have been waiting for the eternal life – from Adam till the end of time – into his bosoms; he will unveil the tree of life that

was guarded by the Cherubim since the fall of Adam to be given to the triumphant in heavens.

With the joy of heavens and the glory of the righteous in the kingdom comes the story of the planning of salvation to its end leaving within us the feelings of hope in the eternity; our eyes will keep looking up to the skies to have the happy ending of the story and recognize the solution to the difficult question and the meaning of existence that was lost and then restored in Christ to be fully completed in the joyful eternity in heavens.



Now...

As if I am hearing your voice, my dear reader, in deep and very powerful sigh that comes from your depths and my own depths also, as we remember the three arrangements of God: the creation, the salvation and then the horizons of eternity. We cry within us from the surplus love that overcome death and granted life.

Yes, my beloved...

All that was for you and me

All that way and those pains

were for the sake of the disobedient son

who made his father runs

in forests, deserts and mountains

To look for him

Turn over rocks

And pass on rough roads

To pull him with the paternal love towards his bosoms

And when he finds him

He lifts him up to dress his wounds

But he was in approval once

And many time insisting on disobedience

However the father did not desert him

But compassionately kept caressing and embracing

And if that way did not work

He tries with the stick and the crutch

Then again returns to carrying on the shoulders
Until the time of disobedience passed
And the vision of humanity was unveiled
To see their compassionate Christ
After the ignorance of sin and the dimness of darkness
We saw the face of God shining in the souls
Our eyes were opened to see him
While being crucified, his body torn and his blood shed
But he rose to resurrect us
He ascended to lift us
He even sent his Spirit
So that we unite with him for ever
Yes, my dear
For ever
Please do not hush up now
While you flavour the feelings of sweeping love
Towards our Christ
Please go out on your own
With the angels to praise him
Lift him up and augment his stature
Because he loved us to the limit
That no one could avoid
Loving him when he comes to knowing him
Come along with me

To join this marvellous symphony
The symphony of eternal planning
To become a character
In the poem of love
That the words of the Bible utter with
That was made and completed
Exclusively for you and me personally
My dear
What that passed is for you and me
Yes...
All the arrangements, all prophesies and all the passion
All the love offered from God
Are to make us at the end
The topic of this love
To become his children who bear his features and his name
And his blessed person to him all the glory forever.

Amen...



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Books by the Writer

English Translated Books:

- By His Death We Live
- Planning of Salvation (Published with a CD)

